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## ‘Continental Connotations’: European Wine Consumption in 1970s Britain

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This article considers the significant increase in wine consumption in Britain in the period 1965–85. It explores the social and cultural meanings attached to wine through a case study analysis of *Good Housekeeping*, a women’s magazine aimed at a mainly middle-class readership. The vast majority of wine consumed in Britain at this time was European, the appeal of which was, for many, rooted in an idealised evocation of continental sophistication. In illuminating the development of new socio-cultural habits, this article reveals the influence of continental tourism is bolstering enthusiasm for wine, as well as the impact of greater availability and affordability in popularising consumption.

Sue: It’s nothing very special, I’m afraid ...

Beverly: [*Unwrapping the bottle*]: Oh, lovely! ‘Cos Laurence likes a drop of wine, actually. Oh, it’s Beaujolais. Fantastic! Won’t be a sec, I’ll just pop it in the fridge.<sup>1</sup>

It is telling that wine featured conspicuously in *Abigail’s Party* (1977), Mike Leigh’s celebrated satire of suburban social climbing. Theatre audiences famously mocked the chilling of red wine as a damning social faux pas, the comic actor and diarist Kenneth Williams noting how they howled ‘knowingly’ at the ‘bad taste’ lines, ‘loving their superiority’.<sup>2</sup> A subsequent BBC television adaptation prompted similar reactions, coupled with a flurry of letters in the national press about the correct way to serve wine.<sup>3</sup> For at least some wine connoisseurs, however, the real joke was on the snobbish audiences, since many experts maintained that Beaujolais was best served lightly chilled.<sup>4</sup> With one critic later pondering flippantly whether ‘any beverage in any work of art had excited quite so much comment or controversy’, it is apparent that Beverly’s Beaujolais moment hit a particular social and cultural nerve, capturing both the enthusiasm and the snobbery wine could conjure in 1970s Britain.<sup>5</sup>

British interest in wine increased markedly in the second half of the twentieth century, with consumption undergoing ‘phenomenal growth’ especially during the 1970s.<sup>6</sup> From 1960 to 1970 consumption doubled from 3.6 pints per head per year to 7 pints. By 1980 this had leaped to 17.9

<sup>1</sup> Mike Leigh, *Abigail’s Party* (London: Penguin, 2017 edn.), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Russell T. Davies, ed., *The Kenneth Williams Diaries* (London: HarperCollins, 1994 edn.), 16 May 1977, 541.

<sup>3</sup> Leigh, *Abigail’s Party*, xi–xii.

<sup>4</sup> A leading contemporary wine guide maintains that Beaujolais is ‘the archetypal lubrication wine, and can be particularly gouleyant, or gulpable, if served cellar cool’. Jancis Robinson, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Wine*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), ‘Beaujolais’, 77.

<sup>5</sup> Tony Whitehead, *Mike Leigh* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 33.

<sup>6</sup> Charles C. Ludington, ‘United Kingdom’, in Kym Anderson and Vicente Pinilla, eds., *Wine Globalization: A New Comparative History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 263.

pints, and by 1990 to 32.1 pints.<sup>7</sup> While wine drinking was far from the ubiquitous everyday habit long associated with wine producing countries like France, Italy and Spain, during the 1970s the habit of drinking wine increased in popularity among a growing section of British society. While the 1980s and 1990s clearly witnessed important developments in the popularisation and democratisation of wine drinking, including via the remarkable popularity of New World wines, a focus on the 1970s affords opportunities to explore the growth of the mass consumption of European wines in Britain.

The developments of the 1970s were linked to broader shifts in cultures of recreation and domesticity. Here social class proved an important factor. Prior to the Second World War wine in Britain had tended to be the preserve of the wealthy and affluent, but especially from the late 1960s interest spread across a broader section of the population, chiefly among the middle classes.<sup>8</sup> As consumption rose, the socio-cultural norms shaping wine drinking were both consolidated and contested. While elite associations with luxury became less dominant, many continued to link wine drinking with social cachet, and certainly perceived it to be more culturally refined than, say, more commonplace beer drinking. There remained a sense that to really appreciate wine the consumer had to acquire knowledge about wine culture, especially in terms of different varieties and how best to serve them. Experience and experimentation with wines would, when combined with understanding, help cultivate good taste – in terms of both gustatory perception and socio-cultural distinction.

Wine's popularity among the British middle classes was inextricably linked to its entrenched associations with continental cultures and refinement. The transformation of mass tourism in the 1970s via cheaper travel and package holidays afforded new opportunities to experience first-hand European habits and cultures, which in turn had a marked effect on attitudes towards wine consumption.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the popularity of continental cuisine, especially from Italy and France, also helped propel interest in wine, as was witnessed in both domestic cookery and restaurant cultures. As travel became more common and continental cuisine became more fashionable, many consumers came to (re)imagine and (re)enact European social habits. For some at least these social and cultural developments were doubtless inspired partly by broader developments concerning Britain's relationship with continental Europe, especially in relation to the United Kingdom's entry to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973 and the referendum on membership in 1975.<sup>10</sup>

Alongside discourses emphasising continental sophistication, the 1970s were also marked by popularisation of wine. A wave of new British wine writing and connoisseurship emerged from the mid-1960s, with older traditions of elite, exclusive (and often masculine) authority increasingly downplayed in favour of a more inclusive wine culture that welcomed a new generation of enthusiasts who wished to learn to appreciate wine while at the same time eschewing what they saw as overweening and outdated snobbery.<sup>11</sup> The notion of wine as an accessible drink became central to its growing acceptance as a normative middle-class habit in this period. Britain had long been a leading importer of wine, but by the 1970s new demand for affordable wines was met increasingly by supermarkets and off-licence retailers. Greater availability encouraged experimentation in the context of home drinking, in both occasional formal entertaining, but also more everyday family dining, especially

<sup>7</sup> Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain, 1940–2000* (London: Macmillan, 2002), 652.

<sup>8</sup> Department for Employment, *Family Expenditure Survey* (London: HMSO, 1965–85); Central Statistical Office, *Social Trends* (London: HMSO, 1975), 99; Information Group Services (Market Information Service), *Take-Home Wines and Spirits in the UK* (Leatherhead: Leatherhead Food R.A., 1986), 7.

<sup>9</sup> R.A. Critchley, ed., *The British Household in the Seventies* (London: International Publishing Corporation Ltd, 1975), 122; 129–31; Lucy M. Long, 'Culinary Tourism', in Jeffrey M. Pilcher, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Food History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017 edn.), 391; Miriam Akhtar and Steve Humphries, *Some Liked It Hot: The British on Holiday at Home and Abroad* (London: Virgin Publishing Ltd, 2000), 101.

<sup>10</sup> For discussion of the much broader theme of Britain's relationship with Europe in the mid-to-late century see, for example: Weight, *Patriots*; Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon, *Continental Drift: Britain and Europe From the End of Empire to the Rise of Euroscepticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) and Robert Saunders, *Yes to Europe! The 1975 Referendum and Seventies Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> David Michalski, 'Wine Connoisseurship' in Scott C. Martin, ed., *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Alcohol: Social, Cultural and Historical Perspectives* (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage, 2015), 1390.

during holidays and weekends. The appearance on the high street of affordable, easy to drink (often sweet) wines was greeted enthusiastically. For many, the emerging status of wine as distinctive but ordinary constituted a striking link with broader class cultures developing at this time. As Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite has argued, the latter third of the twentieth century saw a shift in middle-class cultures away from older preoccupations with deference and tradition but also continued emphasis on status as displayed through consumption. She argues persuasively that the middle class were ‘obsessed with individuality and *not* being conformist, even as its members generally seemed to sign up to a fairly narrow range of lifestyles’.<sup>12</sup>

Gender also played a key role in the development of wine drinking cultures in 1970s Britain. Affluent dining cultures, in both restaurants and in domestic settings, increasingly normalised and promoted wine consumption among men and women alike, but connoisseurship, especially of fine wines, tended to be linked overwhelmingly with masculine cultures of expertise. As this article explores, however, during the 1970s understanding of wine was increasingly promoted among, and indeed by, women as well as men, in both specialist wine publications and broader domestic advice literature. Such was the growing acceptance of wine drinking among women that a 1980 public health survey on alcohol considered that, especially in comparison with beer and spirits, women had become the ‘dominant purchasers and consumers’ of wine.<sup>13</sup>

This shift in attitudes and practices towards wine was underpinned by several interconnecting factors, including the increased availability of wine on the British high street. First licensed in the early 1960s, supermarkets became increasingly significant as wine retailers in the next decade. There was broad acknowledgement of the convenience of shopping for wine alongside other groceries and goods. That women were the main shoppers in most households fostered a new and close connection with wine cultures. While exploration is beyond the scope of this article, it is clear that the wine trade, like the drinks industry more broadly, was devoting much more attention to women consumers at this time, including by advertising in women’s and cookery magazines.<sup>14</sup> Greater availability of wine encouraged experimentation in the context of home drinking, in both occasional formal entertaining, but also more everyday family dining, especially during holidays and weekends. With women largely responsible for food preparation and cooking in the majority of households and wine a notable feature of popular cuisine, the 1970s, then, saw significant developments in terms of the gendering of British wine cultures.

In spite of this significant shift in wine consumption and connoisseurship in the 1970s, wine drinking in twentieth-century Britain has been relatively neglected by historians of alcohol.<sup>15</sup> The increase in wine consumption after 1945 has received scant attention beyond brief mention in alcohol surveys spanning several centuries and in popular narrative histories of drink, as well as in a handful of broader social histories.<sup>16</sup> While scholars including Betsy Thom and Alex Mold have addressed alcohol regulation in the mid-to-late century, fuller historical interpretation of popular drinking cultures in the second half of the century merits development.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, while historical understanding of viti-

<sup>12</sup> Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, *Class, Politics, and the Decline of Deference in England, 1968–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 55 for the quotation.

<sup>13</sup> Camberwell Council on Alcoholism, *Women and Alcohol* (London: Tavistock, 1980), 13.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> One exception is James Simpson ‘Selling to Reluctant Drinkers: The British Wine Market, 1860–1914’, *Economic History Review*, 57, 1 (2004), 80–108. Studies on earlier periods include Charles Ludington’s *The Politics of Wine in Britain: A New Cultural History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013) on early-modern elite consumption.

<sup>16</sup> For example: John Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures: A Social History of Drinks in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999), 154–5; James Nicholls, *The Politics of Alcohol: A History of the Drink Question in England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 195; Paul Jennings, *A History of Drink and the English, 1500–2000* (London: Routledge, 2016), 23–5; Jon Hurley, *A Matter of Taste: A History of Wine Drinking in Britain* (Stroud: Tempus, 2005); Brian Harrison, *Finding a Role: The United Kingdom, 1970–1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 270.

<sup>17</sup> Betsy Thom, *Dealing with Drink – Alcohol and Social Policy: From Treatment to Management* (London: Free Association Books, 1999); Alex Mold, ‘“Everybody Likes a Drink. Nobody Likes a Drunk”: Alcohol, Health Education and the Public in 1970s Britain’, *Social History of Medicine*, 30, 3 (2017), 612–36.

viniculture in European nations is well-developed, exploration of transnational cultures of consumption prompts inclusion of British habits, especially given the long established importance of the United Kingdom as a wine importer.<sup>18</sup>

By focusing on the changing attitudes to wine and wine drinking in 1970s Britain, this article considers the ways in which wine operated as a positional good. It explores the multi-layered socio-cultural meanings attached to wine by drinkers who sought to distinguish their consumption by acquiring and displaying knowledge of how best to buy, serve and drink wines, while at the same time drawing wine into more everyday practices of dining and entertaining. It considers how middle-class consumers, particularly women, constructed, articulated and performed social and cultural scripts that privileged wine as constitutive and emblematic of status and sophistication and explores the emergence in the 1970s of new kinds of ordinary distinctiveness in British middle-class wine culture, which eschewed both overweening snobbery and excessive credulity that any wine was good wine.

While of course acknowledging wine drinking as an embodied, performative act, this article considers the discursive treatment of consumption and the configuration and modulation of idealised performance as articulated in domestic advice literature. Particular consideration is given to the new and often unprecedented attention paid to middle-class women purchasers and consumers of wine. While also drawing on wider wine literature, the article offers a case-study of the representation of wine in *Good Housekeeping* [hereafter *GH*] magazine. A prominent British monthly women's magazine aimed at a mainly middle-class readership, *GH* acts as a lens through which we might view attitudes towards, and experiences of, wine cultures. Increasing attention was paid to wine during the 1970s, chiefly within its content on cooking and entertaining. Above all, *GH* commentary centred on the promotion of moderate wine consumption within the context of stable, familial domesticity. As with much domestic advice and etiquette literature, *GH*'s didactic commentary on cultivation and expression of taste and domestic authority not only facilitated participation in wine cultures but also embedded socio-cultural codes that could be deployed to judge both self and others.<sup>19</sup>

This article's research methodology focused on a detailed reading of all *GH* magazines from the 1970s, some 120 issues, with a database of wine-related content created. Advertisements were not included in this analysis. *GH* cookery books and entertaining manuals were also consulted, including the *Good Housekeeping Book of Wine* (1974). Regrettably, no *GH* company archive is open to the public, and there are no surviving records available about the magazine's editorial policy. Based on a US publication established in 1885, British *GH* was launched in 1922 and remained popular throughout the century. In the late 1950s and early 1960s the magazine shored up circulation through crafting more specialist output focused on home-making, thereby underlining differentiation from other women's magazines centred on themes including fashion.<sup>20</sup> *GH* magazine offered its middle-class, married readership content focused on family and home, underpinned by ideals of heteronormative respectability and consumer-oriented domesticity.<sup>21</sup> As such, the choice to develop extensive coverage of wine cultures during the 1970s pointed to their growing importance among middle-class British women at this time.

Women's magazines have been a useful source for historians. Whilst revealing little about how readers engaged with their content, they have, however, allowed historians to uncover evidence

<sup>18</sup> France has received particular attention, with works in English including: Thomas Brennan, *Burgundy to Champagne: The Wine Trade in Early Modern France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) and Rod Phillips, *French Wine: A History* (Oakland, CA.: University of California Press, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> Grace Lees-Maffei, *Design at Home: Domestic Advice Books in Britain and the USA Since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2014), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Cynthia L. White, *Women's Magazines, 1693–1968* (London: Michael Joseph, 1970), 233–5.

<sup>21</sup> On *GH* see, for example, Catherine Horwood, 'Housewives' Choice and Launching the British Version of *Good Housekeeping*, March 1922', *History Today*, 47, 3 (1997), 23–8 and Lydia Martens and Sue Scott, "'The Unbearable Lightness of Cleaning': Representations of Domestic Practice and Products in *Good Housekeeping* Magazine (UK), 1951–2001', *Consumption, Markets & Culture*, 8, 4 (2005), 379–401.

about family roles, affective relationships, body cultures and domestic discourses.<sup>22</sup> Although coverage of food has been explored, scholarly discussion of wine in women's magazines has been very limited.<sup>23</sup> In a 1997 study sociologist Alan Warde argued that these publications paid little attention to wine, save for brief mentions preoccupied with 'expense, mystery and snobbery'.<sup>24</sup> This article contests such an interpretation, and a detailed study of *GH* shows that representations of wine were more extensive and diverse than has been acknowledged. Moreover, Warde's evidence derived from samples drawn from ten magazines across two twelve-month periods in 1967–8 and 1991–2.<sup>25</sup> As this article reveals, British wine cultures shifted hugely in the intervening years, and it is chiefly through a detailed survey of the 1970s via a focus on *GH* magazine and its associated publications, as well as a broader acknowledgment of wider trends in British wine writing, that a more nuanced mapping of the socio-cultural landscape of British wine emerges.<sup>26</sup>

This article opens by showing the shift in wine consumption in 1970s Britain. Drawing on a variety of primary and secondary literature, it outlines new drinking, eating and leisure habits which impacted British consumption of and attitudes towards wine, particularly amongst the middle classes. The article then moves on to a focused study of all *GH* issues in the 1970s and other related literature. Aside from revealing the importance of gender as well as class in the development of new wine cultures in postwar Britain, the emergence of three themes (wine drinking on holiday; purchasing wine; serving wine) underlines the growing allure of the European continent in British habits and imagination.

### Wine Consumption in 1970s Britain

By the advent of the 1970s, according to the seminal wine writer Jancis Robinson, Britons had begun to 'lose our suspicion of this inherently foreign drink'.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, wine drinking in the United Kingdom had been developing slowly over the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> The 1970s, however, saw a significant shift in wine drinking habits, practices and cultures. The emergent culture of wine drinking after the war both moulded and mirrored wider trends in leisure habits.<sup>29</sup> Building on entrenched practices of entertaining in affluent households, the proliferation of wine drinking in the home was constitutive of the expansion of more comfortable domestic cultures where recreation played a key role. This was facilitated by retail expansion, with the number of off-licences rising from 26,352 in 1965 to 42,646 in

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Marjorie Ferguson, *Forever Feminine: Women's Magazines and the Cult of Femininity* (London: Heinemann, 1983); Penny Tinkler, 'Rebellion, Modernity and Romance: Smoking as a Gendered Practice in Popular Young Women's Magazines, Britain, 1918–39', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 24 (2001), 111–22; Claire Langhamer, 'Everyday Advice on Everyday Love: Romantic Expertise in Mid-twentieth Century Britain', *L'Homme*, 24, 1 (2013), 35–52.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 255–61.

<sup>24</sup> Warde, *Consumption, Food & Taste: Culinary Antinomies and Commodity Culture* (London: Sage, 1997), 106.

<sup>25</sup> Warde, *Consumption, Food & Taste*, 43.

<sup>26</sup> While this article focuses on positive representations of consumption, for many public health commentators wine's swift rise to prominence was linked to a wider proliferation of problem drinking. While the introduction of the breathalyser in 1967 slashed levels of drink-driving, numerous public health authorities including the Royal College of Physicians lobbied for ameliorative action including tighter licensing controls to tackle rising rates of alcohol related disease like liver cirrhosis that were increasingly apparent in the 1970s. See Royal College of Physicians, *A Great and Growing Evil: The Medical Consequences of Alcohol Abuse* (London: Tavistock, 1987).

<sup>27</sup> Jancis Robinson, *Confessions of a Wine Lover* (London: Penguin, 1998 edn.), 22.

<sup>28</sup> Wine consumption was familiar among the wealthy and affluent prior to the Second World War. London restaurants offered ample opportunity to experience wines in the context of fine dining, while entertaining in the home often emphasised the consumption of fine and vintage wines. John Burnett, *England Eats Out: A Social History of Eating Out in England From 1830 to the Present* (London: Pearson Longman, 2004), 196–200.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Claire Langhamer *Women's Leisure in England 1920–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Erika Rappaport, Sandra Dawson and Mark J. Crowley, eds., *Consuming Behaviours: Identity, Politics and Pleasure in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 2015).

1985.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, wine drinking also became an important facet of the expansion of eating out. While the fine dining fashion for haute cuisine from the late nineteenth century helped cultivate an emphasis on wine consumption and the appreciation of fine and vintage wines in particular, the (usually blended) wine on offer until the mid-twentieth century in primarily working-class venues like pubs was unlikely to be good quality.<sup>31</sup> Crucially, by the 1970s the growing demand for wine prompted both wider availability and the raising of standards, with new pub chains like Berni Inn keen to supply decent table wines.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, numerous brewers entered into arrangements with wine merchants, thus ensuring their premises saw a rise in the quality as well as the range of wine on sale.<sup>33</sup>

As new habits were forming, so new drinking spaces were emerging. The increasing place of wine in pub cultures was linked to the growing emphasis on pub food that developed from the 1980s into a fundamental cornerstone of pub life by the end of the century.<sup>34</sup> Yet to be fully explored by historians (and beyond the scope of this article), the rise of wine bars in the late 1970s and 1980s, as successors to the Victorian wine lodge, was indicative of, and contributed to, the growing appeal of wine. With over 1,400 in business by 1986, the wine bar played a key role in broadening consumers' experience of different varieties, as well as proliferating norms of wine drinking as both popularly accessible and constitutive of social cachet.<sup>35</sup>

What were consumers drinking, exactly? Britain's entrenched and on-going reputation as a globally leading wine importer helped shape consumption patterns predicated on the availability of a broad range of light, sparkling and fortified wines. French wines were the most common, though the growing market for medium whites and specifically Liebfraumilch facilitated an expansion of German imports. Spanish and Italian wines were also popular, their comparative cheapness a key attraction for many suppliers and buyers alike. While by no means unknown, New World wines including from the Americas, Australasia and South Africa only rose to major prominence from the 1990s, overtaking European imports in the early 2000s.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, British (and usually English) wine making was small-scale and often unreliable before at least the 1990s.<sup>37</sup> Overwhelmingly, therefore, British consumers conceived of wine as a European commodity.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to the development of new spaces and habits of non-domestic leisure, British wine cultures were indelibly shaped by changing retail spaces and practices. Wine merchants remained important, but the most noted development of the post-war era was the coming of supermarket licensing in the early 1960s, which opened up new consumer habits. Marks and Spencer, for example, began selling wine in 1973, beginning with eight wines and four sherries.<sup>39</sup> The end of retail price agreements in 1965 prompted a 'flood of cut-price liquor' which boosted wine sales significantly.<sup>40</sup> British duties

<sup>30</sup> Brewers' Society, *Statistical Handbook*, 53.

<sup>31</sup> Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures*, 152–3.

<sup>32</sup> Burnett, *England Eats Out*, 280.

<sup>33</sup> Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures*, 152–3.

<sup>34</sup> Christel Lane, *From Taverns to Gastropubs: Food, Drink, and Sociality in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>35</sup> Kathryn McWhirter, ed., *The Good Wine Bar Guide* (London: Consumers' Association and Hodder & Stoughton, 1986), 8.

<sup>36</sup> For a succinct summary on the rise of New World wines, see Phillips, *Short History of Wine*, 322–8. Known as 'empire wines', imports from Australia and South Africa had some prominence in Britain in the late 1920s and 1930s thanks to tariff preferences. See Burnett, *Liquid Pleasures*, 152–3. GH's *Book of Wine* (1974) featured just three paragraphs on non-European/Mediterranean wines. See 66–8.

<sup>37</sup> Stephen Skelton, *The Wines of Britain and Ireland: A Guide to the Vineyards and Wines of England, Wales, Ireland and the Channel Islands* (London: Faber, 2001).

<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, this took place in a context in which wine consumption in many European producer countries was actually in decline. In Italy, for example, wine consumption decreased from 110.5 litres per capita in the decade 1961–70 to 102.1 litres per capita in 1971–80 and further to 92.0 litres per capita in 1980–5. Conversely, over the same time period, Italian beer consumption per capita rose from 9.2 litres in 1961–70 to 19.9 litres in 1981–5. Emanuela Scarpellini *Material Nation: A Consumer's History of Modern Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6–7.

<sup>39</sup> Asa Briggs, *Wine for Sale: Victoria Wine and the Liquor Trade, 1860–1984* (London: Batsford, 1985), 162–3.

<sup>40</sup> Briggs, *Wine for Sale*, 160.

were also reduced in the wake of EEC policies aimed at harmonising wine taxes across member states.<sup>41</sup> Together, these factors helped ensure affordable wines were widely available.

Continental cuisine and wine drinking proved highly popular in domestic settings. Building on entrenched practices of entertaining in affluent households, the proliferation of wine drinking in the home was constitutive of the expansion of more comfortable domestic cultures where recreation played a key role. Greater leisure time in the home shaped family life in new ways, including with the continued development of television. Enthusiasm for continental cookery in the home had been growing from the early 1950s, especially among the middle classes, who readily lapped up Elizabeth David's recipes.<sup>42</sup> For David and others, wine was not only the key continental drink to enjoy with food, but also an important addition in many recipes, epitomised, perhaps, by the fashionable *coq au vin*. Housewives were urged to make efficient use of their freezers in ensuring their households might be regularly supplied with continental-inspired cooking. In her volume of domestic advice, Shirley Conran maintained that time-pressured women, especially those shouldering the double burden of work and family, should stock their freezers with a goodly supply of home-made 'blanquette de veau or coq au vin' or 'shop-bought gourmet frozen dishes such as *canard à l'orange*, *ratatouille*, *boeuf bourguignon*, *fruit de mer* – that sort of thing'.<sup>43</sup> 1970s television reflected the new interest in continental cuisine, with the indomitable Fanny Cradock producing BBC features on Common Market cookery, while 'Galloping Gourmet' Graham Kerr delighted viewers with his enthusiasm for 'slurps' of wine, both in recipes and by the glass.<sup>44</sup> Recipes might sometimes be adapted for the British palate and doubtless some dishes served in both homes and restaurants would have been laughably unrecognisable in their native country, but for many consumers the turn towards continental cuisine was an appealing departure, helping reconfigure interest in Europe via an ambition to recreate if not authentic, then at least approximate, dishes and menus.<sup>45</sup> The new popularity of European cuisine added to, and was augmented by, the growing interest in wine. As *GH* observed in 1969: 'in most Continental countries no meal is regarded as complete unless it is accompanied by an appropriate wine'.<sup>46</sup>

Cultures of wine writing reflected these broader developments. In the early-to-mid twentieth century, connoisseurly guides enjoyed a niche if enthusiastic audience, their more limited circulation a reminder that habitual consumption was overwhelmingly limited to the middle and upper classes. The field was led by authoritative gastronome and oenophile André Simon, who published a prodigious number of guides.<sup>47</sup> A more inclusive culture of appreciation was promoted by Raymond Postgate. Founder of *The Good Food Guide*, Postgate maintained that high-quality cuisine should not be the preserve of the wealthy. Through books including *The Plain Man's Guide to Wine* (1951), Postgate aimed to demystify wine drinking, undercutting the elitism he considered a deterrent to many.<sup>48</sup> The rise in consumption from the mid-1960s was matched by a notable upswing in

<sup>41</sup> Rob Baggott, *Alcohol, Politics and Social Policy* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1990), 110–1.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Elizabeth David *A Book of Mediterranean Cooking* (London: Lehmann, 1950); *The Use of Wine in Fine Cooking* (London: Saccone and Speed, 1950) and her celebrated anthology *An Omelette and A Glass of Wine* (London: Robert Hale, 1984).

<sup>43</sup> Shirley Conran, *Superwoman* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1975), 94.

<sup>44</sup> Fanny Cradock, *Common Market Cookery: France* (London: BBC & E.P. Publishing, 1973) and *Common Market Cookery: Italy* (London: BBC & E.P. Publishing, 1974); Christina Hardyment, *A Slice of Life: The British Way of Eating Since 1945* (London: Penguin, 1997 edn.), 61–2.

<sup>45</sup> Such was the spread of continental cuisine that by 1977 humourist George Mikes could quip that 'today any docker may quarrel with his wife, "What's that Doris, paella? Paella again? . . . What about a decent, honest-to-goodness ratatouille for a change?"' George Mikes, *How To Be A Brit* (London: Penguin, 2015 edn.) 'How to Be Decadent [1<sup>st</sup> pub. 1977], 189.

<sup>46</sup> Good Housekeeping, *Continental Cookery* (London: National Magazine Co., 1969 edn.), 152.

<sup>47</sup> His many works included: *A Wine Primer* (London: M. Joseph, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1934; rev. 1970 & 1973).

<sup>48</sup> Raymond Postgate, *The Plain Man's Guide to Wine* (London: M. Joseph, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1951; rev. 1965, 1970 & 1978).

publications. Europe remained the dominant focus, with extensive attention paid to countries, regions and varieties.<sup>49</sup> Leading publishers like Penguin capitalised on wine's fashionable status.<sup>50</sup>

Within this dynamic field of publishing, several expert authors rose to prominence. Pamela Vandyke Price was the first woman in Britain to write about wine for popular audiences: having first published in the 1950s, she became better known in the following decades thanks to several well-received guides and her role as *The Times*' wine correspondent.<sup>51</sup> In addition to his numerous celebrated books, Hugh Johnson helped popularise wine maps. His pioneering 1971 wine atlas sharpened awareness of the geographies of viti-viniculture, as well as encouraging a broader cultural engagement with Europe among new wine enthusiasts.<sup>52</sup> Jancis Robinson's influence grew rapidly in the 1970s, rooted partly in a commitment to cutting away the worst excesses of connoisseurly pomposity in favour of a more inclusive and egalitarian appreciation of the enjoyment of wine, encapsulated in her 1979 *The Wine Book: A Straightforward Guide to Better Buying and Drinking for Less Money*.<sup>53</sup> Beyond the interest in authoritative yet accessible guides, publishers were keen to exploit the fashion trend of wine drinking, including with respect to the new market for women consumers. In 1973, for instance, Kenneth Mason launched a miniature-sized guide to *Common Market Wines* in a series of 'handbag'-sized volumes that included volumes on cosmetics, calorie-counting and childcare. While its content was akin to more mainstream wine publishing, the connotations of its format were decidedly gendered.<sup>54</sup>

The nature of the British supply market fostered a discursive preoccupation with wine as a 'foreign' commodity whose appeal was rooted in a cosmopolitan otherness, still culturally distinctive but now newly attainable. Publishers, retailers and advertisers all helped modulate wine's otherness so as to attain mass popularisation. Writers often articulated an idealised vision of European wines, focused on positive representations of opportunities for consumption which mostly ignored the political and economic faultlines that, as scholars including Andrew W. M. Smith have argued, could pose enormous challenges for viti-viniculture across local, regional, national and transnational practices and cultures.<sup>55</sup>

Interestingly, authors typically bypassed mention of European geo-politics: regarding German wines, reference to the existence of East Germany was all but absent, discussion of Spanish and Portuguese wines did not acknowledge the existence or demise of their fascist governments and mention of communism was fleeting. Clarity was often lacking over EEC membership, while discussion of overproduction in respect of Common Agricultural Policy was framed as international political and economic news, despite the impact of cheap imports on British consumption.<sup>56</sup> There was a tendency to evoke idealised representations of wine production, coupled with an even greater preoccupation with the social esteem linked to consumption. This propensity was especially apparent in culinary and domestic advice literature.

If wine consumption was very much driven by new enthusiasm for the European continent and its cuisine (both real and imagined), it was – and was seen as – primarily a middle-class phenomenon. Though wine drinking was also rising among the working classes, the wealthy remained bonded to rituals of fine and vintage wine drinking meaning that, as Jancis Robinson has maintained, the

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, Cyril Ray, *The Wines of Germany* (London: Allen Lane, 1977); Jan Read, *The Wines of Spain and Portugal* (London: Faber & Faber, 1973); Edmund Penning Rowsell, *The Wines of Bourdeaux* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973); H. W. Yoxall, *The Wines of Burgundy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974).

<sup>50</sup> Allan Sichel, *The Penguin Books of Wines* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971 [1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1965]).

<sup>51</sup> Pamela Vandyke Price, *A Woman of Taste: Memoirs From the Wine World* (London: John Murray, 1990), 43.

<sup>52</sup> Hugh Johnson, *The World Atlas of Wine: A Complete Guide to the Wines and Spirits of the World* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 1971).

<sup>53</sup> Jancis Robinson, *The Wine Book: A Straightforward Guide to Better Buying and Drinking for Less Money* (London: Fontana, 1979).

<sup>54</sup> Robin Howe, *Common Market Wines* (Havant: Kenneth Mason, 1973).

<sup>55</sup> Andrew W.M. Smith, *Terror and Terroir: The Winegrowers of the Languedoc and Modern France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, *The Times*, 7 July 1972, 17; 5 Sept. 1973, 21; 20 June 1975, 25; 18 Mar. 1978, 4.



major shift towards more regular habitual consumption of table wine happened among the middle classes. Crucially, new habits and rituals of buying and drinking wine constituted a new kind of distinctive 'ordinariness' in many middle-class households, especially among middle-aged, married couples. Wine drinking slotted into the kinds of gentrifying cultures identified by historian Joe Moran as being key to the socially mobile metropolitan middle classes.<sup>57</sup> In this way, the burgeoning 'middle-brow' wine cultures of 1970s Britain formed part of suite of practices, habits and lifestyles that intended to reject more rigid socio-cultural hierarchies that had influenced earlier generations especially with regards to class identities. New living styles rejected the formality of earlier middle-class generations in favour of more relaxed sociability, preferring more informal everyday practices including in relation to food and drink, patterns of sociability and entertaining and home design and decoration.

### New Wine Cultures: A Case Study of *Good Housekeeping Magazine*

Britain's relationship to wine was changing in the 1970s, with new drinking spaces, habits and trends emerging, not least amongst the middle classes. A close study of *Good Housekeeping* in that decade reveals the extent to which middle-class women were involved in new wine cultures as both consumers and purchasers, and indicates the myriad socio-cultural transformations of those years.

From its launch in 1922 and in line with broader attitudes and expectations within affluent, middle-class domestic consumer cultures, *Good Housekeeping* (*GH*) had encouraged moderate wine consumption, typically in the context of festive and celebratory dining and entertaining. A 1925 cookery book, for instance, contained recipes for simple cocktails such as 'claret cup' with citrus fruits and cucumber, along with white wine savoury sauce.<sup>58</sup> Attention to wine grew after the war: in 1949 André Simon contributed a chapter focused on food and wine pairings to a *GH* recipe book, while a 1955 manual on entertaining included advice on wine pairings, as well as advice for serving wine on key occasions including a christening, twenty-first birthday and at a wedding.<sup>59</sup> By the 1960s wine began to feature more frequently. A 1964 *GH* supplement on 'Cooking With Wine' noted the advantages of wine in adding depth and favour to dishes. The influence of European holidays was underlined, with readers encouraged to join the ranks of those inspired by family vacations who were now 'enjoy[ing] foreign cookery and want[ing] to reproduce some of the dishes at home – with all that involves in the way of using garlic, herbs and wine!'<sup>60</sup> Advice on serving wine as part of family occasions and entertaining friends in the home grew in volume and frequency. The December 1965 magazine included commentary on pairing seasonal dishes and wines, for instance. French burgundy and claret were recommended, with readers encouraged to spend 'a shilling or two extra in the range you're accustomed to'.<sup>61</sup> *GH* promoted experimentation with wine, with the idea gaining traction that wine drinking should be part of family meals and more everyday dining, as well as occasional entertaining.

The launch of *GH*'s wine column in January 1968 was a pivotal juncture. The editorial team asserted they had 'long felt there was a gap in *GH* when it came to useful information about wine'.<sup>62</sup> Notably, the magazine secured column contributions from numerous illustrious wine writers, underlining *GH*'s culinary standing, as well as its ambitions to accrue an authoritative reputation. Reflecting developments in wine writing more broadly, columns were written by both male and female authors.<sup>63</sup> Throughout the 1970s the column focused on the twin aims of encouraging

<sup>57</sup> Joe Moran, 'Early Cultures of Gentrification in London, 1955–1980', *Journal of Urban History*, 34, 1 (2007), 101–21.

<sup>58</sup> Florence B. Jack, *Good Housekeeping Cookery Book* (London: Good Housekeeping Magazine, 1925), 242; 116.

<sup>59</sup> *GH, Cookery Book* (London: GH Institute, 1949); *GH, Book of Entertaining* (London: National Magazine Co., 1955). Predominantly in the first half of the century, *GH* also published recipes for home-made wines, aimed at those who grew suitable fruits at home: see *GH, Book of Preserves, Pickles, Salads and Home-made Wines* (London: GH Institute, 1942).

<sup>60</sup> *GH* Supplement, *Cooking with Wine*, 1964

<sup>61</sup> *GH*, 88 (Dec. 1965), 103.

<sup>62</sup> *GH*, 93 (Jan. 1968), 18.

<sup>63</sup> Contributors included noted wine writers André Simon, Raymond Postgate and Pamela Vandyke Price.

experimentation and enhancing appreciation, with particular themes given repeated coverage over the years, especially variety, place of origin and guidance on buying and serving. Consideration of wine varieties was predictably prominent, with features on claret appearing in March 1970, sherry in May 1972 and rioja in March 1979, for example.<sup>64</sup> Coverage of specific wine regions included a column on the Loire in September 1970, Burgundy in March 1972 and the Midi in April 1979.<sup>65</sup> Articles discussing a particular country included coverage of Italy in August 1970, France in April 1974 and Germany in September 1975, for instance.<sup>66</sup> Columns on buying wine were published in January 1970 and January 1979.<sup>67</sup> Content on food and wine pairings, including for parties, appeared in June 1971 and February 1979.<sup>68</sup>

A striking feature of *GH*'s columns – and indeed wine writing more broadly at this time – was the recapitulation of key themes. The 1974 *Good Housekeeping Book of Wine* retraced much of the content featured in monthly issues, for instance, with one chapter devoted to shopping for wine. It ran through the merits and drawbacks of different retail options, including the expert advice on offer from a well-established wine merchant, or the bargain everyday tipples to be found in supermarkets.<sup>69</sup> It could be argued that repetition was deemed constitutive of reader confidence in a period of dynamic change. Undoubtedly, anxieties could arise around the display of appropriate understanding of wine and fears of social awkwardness, or, worse still, public shaming. As Jane Deverson and Katherine Lindsay discovered in their 1975 social survey of *Voices from the Middle Class*, while many of the middle-class suburban-dwellers they interviewed 'claimed to have shaken off a rigid and strict upbringing . . . they had no wish to step outside the bounds of acceptable middle-class behaviour'.<sup>70</sup> In negotiating these developments *GH* trod a middle path which both contributed to, and also contested, concerns about etiquette and social prestige, emphasising socio-cultural preferences, but ultimately promoting consumption as its key aim. While this article focuses on *GH* content, inevitably readers would also have been influenced by the wine advertisements which sometimes featured in the magazine. Branded wine adverts were most common, promoting aspirational consumption via an evocation of continental sophistication and, oftentimes, an appeal to feminine domesticity. Adverts for Mateus Rosé, the sweet frizzante which became a household name such was its mass popularity, proclaimed it to be 'the perfect accompaniment to dining out and eating in', and generally 'enchanting'.<sup>71</sup>

That a mainstream women's magazine such as *GH* developed such a focus on wine was significant. The serving of wine in relation to domestic dining was often linked to women, and especially housewives, as well as female servants, especially in the period up to the Second World War. However, until at least the early 1950s the buying and, especially, the appreciation of fine wine, was typically conceptualised as masculine practice: indeed, elite wine tastings were very much male-dominated.<sup>72</sup> *GH* did not articulate an overtly feminist challenge to gendered norms: its framing of wine cultures within domestic discourses promoting women's roles as housewives and hostesses was sharply at odds with the Women's Liberation politics of this period which contested entrenched ideals of women's overwhelmingly white, heteronormative family and home-based roles.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, the magazine's commitment to promoting positive narratives of women's engagement with wine culture was striking, especially its foregrounding of female authority. In etiquette manuals up to the late 1950s, there was

<sup>64</sup> *GH*, 97 (Mar. 1970), 96; 101 (May 1972), 181–2; 115 (Mar. 1979), 82–3.

<sup>65</sup> *GH*, 98 (Sept. 1970), 122; 101 (Mar. 1972), 152; 115 (Apr. 1979), 94–5.

<sup>66</sup> *GH*, 98 (Aug. 1970), 102; 105 (Apr. 1974), 280; 108 (Sept. 1975), 80–2.

<sup>67</sup> *GH*, 97 (Jan. 1970), 104; 115 (Jan. 1979), 178.

<sup>68</sup> *GH*, 99 (Jun. 1971), 50–9; 115 (Feb. 1979), 163.

<sup>69</sup> *GH*, *Good Housekeeping Book of Wine* (London: Ebury Press, 1974).

<sup>70</sup> Jane Deverson and Katherine Lindsay, *Voices from the Middle Class: Study of Family in Two London Suburbs* (London: Hutchinson, 1975), 56.

<sup>71</sup> *GH*, 100 (Sept. 1971), 12.

<sup>72</sup> Vandyke Price, *Woman of Taste*, 66–70.

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, the influential Ann Oakley, *Housewife* (London: Allen Lane, 1974).

some emphasis on masculine prerogative in choosing wines both for home drinking and in venues like restaurants.<sup>74</sup> Especially for major occasions, *GH* sometimes encouraged readers to choose wine with their husbands, promoting joint decision making in the context of companionate marriage, although this had fallen away even by the late 1960s.<sup>75</sup> Interestingly, *GH*'s positive representations of women and wine extended to features on women wine writers and tasters: a June 1979 feature on 'Women in the Wine World' foregrounded the achievements of key figures including Jancis Robinson in forging acknowledgement of women's authority in relation to wine.<sup>76</sup>

In exploring *GH*'s constructive discourses, attention now turns to three key themes: wine drinking on holiday, the purchase of wine and the serving of wine. These issues featured regularly in the magazine across the period, with discussion framed by particular engagement with representations of continental cultures as a key aspect of wine's growing appeal for the British middle classes.

The growth of European tourism featured prominently in *GH* throughout the 1970s, with coverage reflecting the fashion for all-inclusive package holidays, as well as self-catering camping and touring vacations. As Miriam Akhtar and Steve Humphries have noted, 'returning holidaymakers wanted to bring back "the good life", and so it followed that French bistros and Italian trattorias and pizzerias became more popular in Britain'.<sup>77</sup> *GH* content invoked an aspirational culture of consumption, as well as meeting burgeoning demand for practical advice. Contrasting with historically entrenched (and often decidedly stereotypical) critiques of 'foreign food', and poor quality tea making in particular, *GH* championed the sampling of local cuisine as a means of experiencing authentic continental culture and thereby accruing social distinction.<sup>78</sup> As an article of January 1970 asked, 'when you go abroad do you want a large hotel with all mod cons and menus planned with the English in mind, or do you like those small hotels with local cooking and plenty of atmosphere?'<sup>79</sup> Many articles on holiday dining welcomed wine drinking as standard, low cost *vin ordinaire* being much applauded. The use of simple jugs and tumblers was welcomed as symbolic of continental authenticity, contrasting with the more elaborate material culture of very formal dining where fine glassware was *de rigueur*. In January 1971 Robin Abney wrote approvingly of the 'absurdly cheap' jugs of wine he purchased in Italy to accompany local fresh fish and the 'inevitable mountains of pasta, served with highly-spiced garlic sauces'.<sup>80</sup> Readers were encouraged to try local wines not widely known in Britain. Describing a trip to the island of Hvar in Dalmatia, Roger Smithells noted that in the small town of Jelsa readers might seek out 'its own particular white wine Bogdanjcisa, if you can pronounce it'.<sup>81</sup> *GH* contended that authentic experiences of experimenting with local varieties could also enhance discernment: reviewing a holiday on Elba, Sebastian Cash noted that 'Aleatico, the local wine, is passable, but Moscato, a dessert wine, has real quality'.<sup>82</sup> This kind of commentary underlined the importance of lived experience in coming to know and appreciate wine.

*GH* also noted the growing habit of bringing home souvenir bottles. Low cost was one appeal, but the material culture of wine souvenirs could be underpinned by particular emotional resonance. A bottle taken home and kept after its contents were consumed might operate not only as an evocative reminder of an enjoyable holiday, but also held certain significance as an object whose display in the home for both self and others invoked an appeal to, and performance of, social distinction. Arguably the *pièce de résistance* was a straw-covered fiasco bottle, much prized owing to the do-it-yourself fashion for turning these into candle-holders and lampshades, echoing styles seen (or imagined) in Italian

<sup>74</sup> For example: *GH*, *Book of Entertaining* (London: National Magazine Co., 1955), 14; 132.

<sup>75</sup> *GH*, 93 (Dec. 1968), 36.

<sup>76</sup> *GH*, 115 (June 1979), 98–9; 255.

<sup>77</sup> Akhtar and Humphries, *Some Liked It Hot*, 101 for the quotation.

<sup>78</sup> George B. Mair, *A Guide to Package Holidays* (London: NEL Books, 1974), 69.

<sup>79</sup> *GH*, 97 (Jan. 1970), 7.

<sup>80</sup> *GH*, 99 (Jan. 1971), 'Getaway' supplement, 40.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

restaurants.<sup>83</sup> The appeal to authenticity was key here: even though an identical one might be available on shelves in Britain, the fact that a bottle had been bought abroad appealed to the sense of knowledge of, and participation in, authentic continental wine cultures.

An illuminating appeal to authenticity underpinned *GH*'s commentary on visiting vineyards in its coverage of holidays. In an article of April 1971, Gabor Denes emphasised that 'vineyard visits and the hospitality that goes with them does not depend on privilege. Many of the finest wine châteaux and estates of Europe are open to anyone interested.' Visits were promoted as informative and enjoyable: 'every visit brings new knowledge, new tastes and, most emphatically, new friends'. Denes's encouragement to readers to obtain a letter of introduction from their wine merchant to ensure 'a red-carpet reception' revealed an assumption that those serious enough about wine to visit a vineyard would be serious enough to buy their supplies from a dedicated expert, rather than take the self-service super-market option. Interestingly, however, Denes also reassured readers that most vineyards would also welcome impromptu visitors.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, elsewhere *GH* acknowledged that a trip to a vineyard might be unappealing to many, noting grapes were, 'after all, only another agricultural crop'. For others, though, the rewards could be irresistible: 'to a wine lover the sight of a well-kept vineyard is beautiful and exciting'.<sup>85</sup> As far as *GH* was concerned, such attraction was rooted partly in the continental otherness of the vineyard.

Readers were even encouraged to try a wine holiday. With wine tourism still in its relative infancy, *GH*'s coverage focused mainly on France, Germany and Italy. Numerous articles welcomed opportunities for more immersive experiences of particular wine regions and their viti-vinicultural traditions. In April 1972 *GH* editor Charlotte Lessing wrote about a wine holiday in Portugal. While noting that to reap 'full enjoyment from a holiday like this' readers should be food and wine enthusiasts, Lessing encouraged readers not to see the wine vacation as solely for the learned gastronome. She advocated harvest as the best time for an authentic experience: 'this is the time to go and see and taste; to hear the singing and see the local dancing. This will get you off to a very good start for the better understanding of port.'<sup>86</sup> Like *GH*'s wine coverage more widely, Lessing's article adopted a middling position. She reflected positively on a visit to the vineyard of Mateus Rosé, where the scale of operations spoke to the firm's winning combination of 'old-world manners' and up-to-date 'marketing methods' to create a slick tourist experience. Lessing also discussed trips to small vineyards producing vinho verde, then a lesser known variety in Britain. In doing so, she emphasised both the value of experimentation and the esteem to be gained from serving unknown wines while entertaining.<sup>87</sup>

Overall, *GH* encouraged wine drinking as an enjoyable holiday experience, but more significantly, regarded opportunities to sample wines in their place of origin as constitutive of social and cultural esteem. *GH* tended to promote a particular kind of imagined authenticity where the process of agricultural production, while not wholly ignored, was much downplayed in favour of an emphasis on the esteem attached to visiting vineyards, their continental otherness emblematic of the broader appeal of holidays in Europe at this time. As Tony Lord, editor of *The Decanter*, put it in April 1977, for 'the wine drinker and wine lover who wants to combine a little education, a little tasting, a lot of fun and relaxation', the wine holiday was an ideal choice.<sup>88</sup> The lived experiences of holiday makers helped to reconfigure British wine cultures and consumption practices in this period, with the replication of vacation experiences (or even simply an imagined version of them) also helping to mould retail practices at home.

*GH*'s focus on wine consumption at home was expansive, encouraging the adoption of more everyday practices of moderate drinking, and offering extensive didactic advice on how to buy and serve wine as part of its wider promotion of culinary accomplishment. Commentary on purchasing wines

<sup>83</sup> *GH*, 98 (Aug. 1970), 4; *GH*, Robinson, *The Wine Book*, 56.

<sup>84</sup> *GH*, 99 (Apr. 1971), 110.

<sup>85</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*, 18.

<sup>86</sup> *GH*, 101 (Apr. 1972), 99.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 100.

<sup>88</sup> *GH*, 111 (Apr. 1977), 72.

emphasised the very wide range on offer in Britain, with readers reminded that they could choose from a broader selection than was available in European countries.<sup>89</sup> Interestingly in the late 1960s there was some hesitancy over recommending particular wines, with *GH* instructing readers to write directly to its Hostess Editor for leaflets giving specific suggestions.<sup>90</sup> Across the 1970s, however, *GH* aligned itself more overtly with the ethos of consumer advocacy then becoming prominent both among wine writers and more generally. Significantly, *GH* presented its advice in the same register used for other consumer-related content, thereby inculcating confidence that readers would be able to navigate wine purchasing with the skills they deployed in their other shopping to ensure the acquisition of good quality, value for money goods. With declining reference to the role of husbands in choosing wine, *GH* positioned itself as an ample source for any advice readers might need across a range of retail settings. The 1974 *Book of Wine* argued it was ‘strange’ that anyone remained convinced that wine was a ‘man’s world’: ‘wine is increasingly bought by women who in fact buy more than men. It is, therefore, only sensible if women know something about a commodity on which they are spending their money.’<sup>91</sup>

Inevitably questions about what to buy were framed in relation to the thorny question of personal taste. As was common in many wine guides, *GH* maintained that readers must always be guided by individual preference, but at the same time emphasised the value of cultivating finer appreciation of wine through experience. While confident purchasing of one’s own wine for different occasions would ‘require knowledge of the different types of wine’, theoretical knowledge of ‘tradition and convention’ would likely not trump understanding gleaned through individual experience.<sup>92</sup> This freighted position – you choose, but be sure to choose well – would for some arguably increase, rather than diminish, anxiety. Indeed, domestic advice literature more broadly had long had the effect of generating disquiet about the proper cultivation and display of refinement.<sup>93</sup> How would a reader know if her palate was sophisticated enough to ensure she bought the ‘right’ kind of wine? While some might have been assured in acquiring knowledge via *GH* about how to serve wine, the issue of how to buy the best wine for a particular occasion was more fraught, including of course because palates varied between individuals. The most obvious steer *GH* gave was an indication that the more sophisticated palate preferred drier wines to sweet varieties, thus mirroring and contributing to broader discussion on this theme in British wine writing in the 1970s.<sup>94</sup> Readers were given reassurance that there was ‘nothing to be ashamed of’ in liking sweet wines, but there was also a clear message that ‘many of us grow to like drier wines’.<sup>95</sup> Crucially, experimentation was seen as the key to countering the risk of ‘spend[ing] the rest of your drinking life restricted to perhaps three or four different wines, and possibly liv[ing] in ignorance of the many other kinds’.<sup>96</sup>

In its guidance on where to buy, *GH* emphasised a preference for purchasing from wine merchants, not least because typically they offered samples.<sup>97</sup> Trying before buying was promoted as the savvy way to shop, being less risky than a gamble on an untried bottle. *GH* encouraged readers to build a relationship with their local merchant in order to reap maximum benefit from the latter’s expertise, including ‘not only *what* to buy . . . but also *how* money can be wisely spent’.<sup>98</sup> Shoppers were encouraged to supply wine merchants with exact details of the occasion for which wine was being purchased, the food to be served and the available budget, noting, ‘all these points are of interest to the man behind the counter’ who would take ‘personal pride’ in recommending a bottle, however ‘modest’,

<sup>89</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*, 96.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, *GH*, 99 (Mar. 1971), 102 regarding Pamela Vandyke Price’s selection of burgundies.

<sup>91</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*, 13.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>93</sup> Lees-Maffei, *Design at Home*, 190.

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, Robinson, *The Wine Book*, 28.

<sup>95</sup> *GH*, 97 (May 1970), 110.

<sup>96</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*, 25, 33.

<sup>97</sup> Good Housekeeping Library of Cooking, *Drinks, Cocktails and Homemade Wines* (London: Sphere Books, 1969), 73.

<sup>98</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*, 96.

that would 'bring you back for more and so encourage you to become a regular customer'.<sup>99</sup> Once experience had been built up, Vandyke Price urged more confident consumers to seek recommendations for wines 'not yet widely known', thus emphasising to readers a means of further leveraging coveted social distinction.<sup>100</sup>

For *GH*, buying from merchants was typically regarded as preferable to purchasing from supermarkets, especially when shopping for something more special than an everyday wine. The magazine's position on supermarkets was noticeably lukewarm, even in the late 1970s and into the 1980s, despite the huge growth in this sector of off-licence sales underpinned to a large extent by competitive pricing. This placed the magazine somewhat at odds with the broader emphasis on the appeal of supermarket wine shopping which had become widespread even by the mid-1970s, thanks to the convenience of self-service and low pricing.<sup>101</sup> Several major chains developed particular interests in wine, launching own-label brands and using their size to broker deals on a scale hitherto unknown which ensured mass consistency. Sainsbury's was the market leader, with the Co-Op and Tesco also performing well.<sup>102</sup>

Despite, or indeed because of, these consumer oriented developments, *GH* was ambivalent towards supermarkets. Robin Young lamented that supermarkets offered 'little in the way of personal advice and service' and regretted that the imperatives placed on buying up 'huge quantities' of commercially acceptable wine to stock chains uniformly had an overall effect of driving down quality. He considered that patronising supermarkets diminished the act of wine buying, rendering it a prosaic purchase on a par with 'baked beans and toilet rolls'.<sup>103</sup> Supermarkets were deemed most useful for bulk purchases for parties and large-scale entertaining. In December 1970 *GH* Hostess Editor Margaret Sherman urged readers to save money by shopping at supermarkets for 'trusted brands of fortified wines'. She went on: 'table wines, especially the rather more expensive, I prefer to order from the traditional wine merchant who treats them with proper respect and, of course, will deliver as and when wanted'.<sup>104</sup> The 1974 *GH* wine manual conceded that the supermarket was 'the place to shop for inexpensive, everyday wine' but little more. Beyond this, *GH* often directed readers to other retailers, warning of the perils of 'buy[ing] on the label'.<sup>105</sup> One such risk was of manufactured authenticity: *GH* warned its readers to beware the 'stridently-labelled bottle, of many colours . . . bearing a number of different lettering styles and obviously invented *historic* pictures and legends'. Such a label would likely 'be trying to make up for the uncertain quality of its contents'.<sup>106</sup> Doubtless some readers did patronise supermarkets exclusively, but the magazine's emphasis on wine buying as best suited to more specialist (and typically more expensive) retailing was striking for its prioritising of social status.

Other retailers were also discussed by *GH*. Although not rated as highly as independent merchants, high street off-licence chains were commended for their general advice and consumer advocacy. Good value was also appreciated: a 1970 column on Spanish wines, for instance, noted that chains Victoria Wine, Peter Dominic and Threshers had all 'gone to a lot of trouble' to source wines 'just right for British tastes'. Certainly a visit to an off-licence chain (or indeed a supermarket) was seen as preferable to a panicked dash to a corner shop, whose forlorn offering was usually limited to a few dusty bottles at extortionate prices.<sup>107</sup> As with all other shopping, the *GH* reader was encouraged to plan her wine purchases with some care. This in turn links to much broader consumer practices and cultures in the

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>100</sup> *GH*, 99 (Mar. 1971), 73.

<sup>101</sup> On the growth of UK supermarkets, see Gareth Shaw *et al.*, 'The Coming of the Supermarket: The Processes and Consequences of Transplanting American Know-how Into Britain', in Ralph Jessen and Lydia Nembach-Langer, eds., *Transformations of Retailing in Europe After 1945* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 35–53.

<sup>102</sup> Key Note Report, *The Off-Licence Trade* (London: Key Note Publications, 1986).

<sup>103</sup> *GH*, 127 (Feb. 1985), 155.

<sup>104</sup> *GH*, 98 (Dec. 1970), 78.

<sup>105</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*, 105.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *GH*, 98 (July 1970), 111.

post-war era, with mindful buying linked to cultivation and performance of social status through efficient purchasing and consumer understanding.

Crucially, *GH* facilitated wine shopping through its Shopping Club, a mail order enterprise offering readers good value deals on a wide range of domestic goods. Wine clubs were becoming more common from the 1970s, with *The Sunday Times*' club especially prominent thanks to the high profile of its president, author Hugh Johnson.<sup>108</sup> *GH*'s club signalled an intervention to help readers navigate the sometimes tricky process of wine buying, coupled with a reinscribing of its domestic authority. In most cases, all readers had to do was choose from a very limited range of options, usually either a mixed case or a dozen of one variety chosen from a short list. Club offers typically focused on collections from a single country, with France and Germany predominant: the French offer of June 1970, for example, featured Châteauneuf-du-pape (1967), Loire Muscadet, Alsace Sylvaner, Beaujolais Moulin-à-Vent (1967), Pouilly-Fuissé (1968) and Clarets Margaux.<sup>109</sup> Regional collections were also common, while summer and Christmas offers capitalised on periods when consumption increased, with advertising emphasising ease as well as enjoyment for the customer.<sup>110</sup> The magazine ran tastings in conjunction with many offers, as was the case in 1970 when *GH* collaborated with Stowells of Chelsea to offer tutored sampling led by a Master of Wine. As well as promoting the offer – 'we think they're simply delicious, but you don't have to take out word for it' – tastings served a broader purpose in normalising consumption, with attendees expected to drink the samples.<sup>111</sup> While, regrettably, statistics on sales are not available, it can be seen that *GH*'s foray into wine sales was predicated on an assertion of domestic authority, with consumer confidence bolstered by the magazine's arbitrating influence in dealing with matters of good taste. Its wine club represented a striking example of the modulation of continental otherness which created a commercially appealing cultural equilibrium, diminishing the discomfort of the unknown while maintaining the mystique of European sophistication.

While most *GH* commentary on purchasing wine was for home consumption, it is notable that buying wine in licensed venues was also addressed, with particular focus given to restaurant dining. Wine lists were acknowledged as provoking anxiety among some diners. Readers were encouraged to 'know a little about the subject, to be firm about what you have to spend and to have formed ideas about what you like'. Presumably this was a tall order for some, but *GH* reassured readers that those who took its advice seriously would 'know at least as much if not much more than the average wine waiter'.<sup>112</sup> Readers were encouraged to be confident discussing orders with wine waiters: 'after all, you've been reading about wine . . . and you should be able to remember some of the recommendations'.<sup>113</sup> Readers were also enjoined not to be discouraged by more traditional gendered expectations that wine would be chosen by men. The 1974 wine manual noted that 'in many wine regions there is nothing remarkable about the woman giving the orders for the wines as well as the food in a restaurant'.<sup>114</sup> While attitudes towards gendered family roles were by no means uniformly progressive or socially liberal at this time, British women were encouraged, and indeed expected, to exercise domestic authority also in the sphere of wine consumption.

Recommendations for serving wine were a major preoccupation for *GH* and were published as part of the culinary content which formed a major strand within each issue. Consumption was overwhelmingly conceptualised within frameworks of commensality and hospitality, with social occasions like dinner parties the primary settings at which hostesses (and indeed guests) might display their

<sup>108</sup> Hugh Johnson, *Wine: A Life Uncorked* (London: Phoenix, 2006 edn.), 26. The club launched in Aug. 1973.

<sup>109</sup> *GH*, 97 (June 1970), 48–9.

<sup>110</sup> For example: *GH*, 98 (Nov. 1970), 80–1; 99 (June 1971), 59; 100 (Nov. 1971), 97.

<sup>111</sup> *GH*, 98 (Oct. 1970), 54. This contrasts with Serena Sutcliffe, *The Wine Drinker's Handbook* (London: Pan, 1982), 198 which promoted connoisseurly practice among new wine drinkers: 'if you are worried about your spitting prowess, try practising (with water?) in the kitchen sink at home. Aim improves with practice.'

<sup>112</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*, 165.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>114</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*, 173.

understanding and appreciation. Moving on from early to mid-century norms, wine was included in a wide variety of menu suggestions. Contrasting with earlier culinary traditions which linked wine drinking with luxury, *GH* promoted consumption in less formal contexts, both reflecting and contributing to wine's wider popularisation.

The often vexed issue of food and wine pairings was addressed frequently. Very well-established norms advocating the chilling of whites and the avoidance of reds with more delicate flavours like fish were mentioned regularly. The 1974 *Book of Wine* laid particular emphasis on the theme, maintaining that 'the overall piece of advice which is likely to be of use is that wine should either complement or contrast with the dish'.<sup>115</sup> The relative importance of rules was also addressed: while those with 'some experience of wine' might be found breaking traditional rules about pairing, such practice risked 'spoiling the enjoyment of your guests'. In underlining the imperatives of politeness towards guests, *GH* again signalled the social distinction to be accrued from acting as a good host. In order to help readers navigate matching dishes and wines, the 1974 manual featured a two-page table on the 'simple conventional partnership of wine and food'. Categories included 'fine wine', 'medium quality', 'everyday, inexpensive wine' and 'any kind', with suitable matches listed for a range of food types and courses including soups, fish, meat, poultry, cheese and desserts. Whites sub-divided as dry full-bodied, dry light-bodied and sweet, while reds were listed as full-bodied, light-bodied and sweet.<sup>116</sup> A few pages on, however, came the proviso that while 'many people try to be very particular in choosing wines with foods', in refusing to recognise that 'wines themselves vary so much' it was 'risky to lay down hard and fast rules as to what goes with what'. Thus, for the nervous and inexperienced, the stakes might still have been higher than they would have liked. Crucially, *GH* maintained that readers could and should grow to trust their own personal preferences, especially once they had more experience of wine drinking. 'Be reassured', the manual encouraged, 'if you follow certain basic, sensible rules . . . as your experience grows you can start to experiment and eventually you will choose wine with complete reassurance. . . . Try always to look on the choice of wine with food as a something fascinating and enjoyable rather than a difficult problem.'<sup>117</sup>

Rather than simply publishing lists of specific wines to buy to accompany particular dishes, *GH* aimed not only to educate but also to empower its readers, a trend that spoke to its engagement with the wider emphasis on women's engagement with wine cultures in this period. For *GH* endless reliance on rules was a barrier to experimentation, which in turn might impede familiarity and, therefore, confidence with wine. Strict deference to vintage charts was deemed unnecessary for the *GH* housewife, for instance.<sup>118</sup>

Readers were encouraged to remember that consumers in wine producing countries chose their wine 'entirely according to what they feel like drinking', a fact which in turn rendered 'much of our particularisation about what should go with what [as] rather unnecessary'.<sup>119</sup> Once again, the appeal to emulate European habits was underpinned by an invocation of authentic familiarity. It was perhaps a relief to some readers that cooking with wine was a more straightforward affair. In its discussion of continental recipes, *GH* was consistent in its advice to use only inexpensive wine: as a 1970 entertaining manual put it, 'almost anything will do'.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, readers were reassured there was no need to match wine and dish by country of origin: 'you can do a stew, such as coq au vin, which is essentially a Burgundian recipe, and make use of a little claret, Spanish or other red wine if this is what you happen to have'.<sup>121</sup> For *GH* at least, excessive fastidiousness when cooking with wine went counter to the central imperative of simply enjoying the pleasures of wine.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>116</sup> *GH, Book of Wine*, 128–9.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 124

<sup>118</sup> *GH*, 99 (Feb. 1971), 198.

<sup>119</sup> *GH, Book of Wine*, 125.

<sup>120</sup> Good Housekeeping Institute, *Cooking for Company* (London: Ebury Press, 1970), 233.

<sup>121</sup> *GH, Book of Wine*, 182–3.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.



Wine suggestions became more common (though not ubiquitous) alongside recipes for everyday dining, including meals for families and couples at weekends: in October 1970 a recipe for a 'chicken bake' was accompanied by recommendations for 'a good mellow hock', for instance.<sup>123</sup> Wine recommendations primarily formed part of menus for special family weekend meals and festive occasions, as well as dinner parties and other entertaining. Predictably, wine was a prominent element of Eurocentric menus. Reflecting their popularity, *GH* published regular dinner party menus. In March 1971 Vandyke Price declaimed the virtues of serving 'good burgundy' with classic French dishes such as coq au vin.<sup>124</sup> Here, gustatory experimentation was privileged as a display of distinction.

The price of wine was entangled in these discussions. The magazine tackled the etiquette of giving and receiving gifts of wine at dinner parties, with particular emphasis on the need to avoid embarrassing guests with regards to cost or placing the inexperienced under pressure. In a menu suggestion for a pasta meal for twelve featuring 'traditional long spaghetti and fancy pasta shapes', *GH* advised the hostess to graciously discourage guests from excessive and possibly competitive spending, adding she should 'specify gently that it's to be wine of honest plonk style and price'.<sup>125</sup> Interestingly, consuming table wine rather than, say, a rarer vintage bottle, would align the meal more closely with everyday continental culinary habits, thereby corroborating notions of authentic commensality.

Predictably, menus for special occasions, and especially Christmas, made greater allowance for finer wines, though there was always an overriding emphasis on affordability and accessibility. Interestingly, the *GH* Wine Club was promoted as offering simple solutions for readers. The December 1970 issue contended that 'Christmas dinner deserves a well-chosen wine partnership to do justice to the cook's endeavours'. While noting that 'look[ing] around and try[ing] half a bottle of this or that' was a 'pleasant way to educate the taste buds', *GH*'s wine club advert extolled: 'we do that sort of thing all the year round, assessing on your behalf. That's how we chose the wines for our special offer.'<sup>126</sup>

*GH* offered extensive commentary on serving wine at drinks parties. Building on early to mid-century cultures of cocktail and sherry parties, by the 1970s drinks parties had spread across a wider social spectrum, with *GH* recommending their suitability for the less experienced hostess since they avoided more elaborate food preparation and cooking. Particular praise was reserved for the continental themed party, where a buffet of snacks, such as paté, from a particular country might be matched with local wines.<sup>127</sup> Perhaps most fashionable was the wine and cheese party, deemed a sophisticated occasion which would allow the hostess to display her wine knowledge, especially if she followed *GH*'s advice to pair produce according to region and country.<sup>128</sup> Single drink events were popular, with sherry and madeira both recommended, as well as themed evenings focussed on, say, wines from a particular holiday region.<sup>129</sup> A 1970 *GH* entertaining manual maintained that for a wine and cheese party for fifty guests, the hostess should offer two whites to go with creamy cheeses possibly a 'Bordeaux, like Mouton Cadet Blanc, and Liebfraumilch-Kellergergeist' and two reds, perhaps 'Portuguese Sao Pedro Dao Tinto, Italian Valpolicella or Bardolino' to pair with an English selection and some continental blues.<sup>130</sup> Seasonal drinks parties were also recommended, including summer events with refreshing mixers such as 'Kalte Ente or "cold duck"', a German white wine cup.<sup>131</sup> Suggestions for Christmas and New Year drinks parties also often featured mixers such as glühwein and vin chaud.<sup>132</sup> Always attendant to value for money, the magazine argued that when

<sup>123</sup> *GH*, 98 (Oct. 1970), 66.

<sup>124</sup> *GH*, 99 (Mar. 1971), 102.

<sup>125</sup> *GH*, 98 (Oct. 1970), 66.

<sup>126</sup> *GH*, 98, (Dec. 1970), 78.

<sup>127</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*, 155.

<sup>128</sup> *GH*, *Cooking for All Occasions* (London: Octopus Books Ltd, 1976), 115.

<sup>129</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*, 155–7.

<sup>130</sup> Good Housekeeping Institute, *Cooking for Company* (London: Ebury Press, 1970), 93.

<sup>131</sup> *GH*, 97 (June 1970), 134.

<sup>132</sup> *GH*, 98 (Nov. 1970), 157; *GH*, *Cooking for All Occasions*, 218–9.

hosting large numbers, hostesses should not be afraid to serve less costly wines, especially for mixers purchased from supermarkets and cut-price retailers.

As *GH* affirmed in 1974, wine parties were ‘a fairly recent but very popular form of entertainment’.<sup>133</sup> They not only played a key role in the popularisation of wine consumption, but held particular significance as occasions for the cultivation and expression of social esteem. Whether hosting an intimate gathering or a much larger event, when running a successful wine party, the ideal *GH* reader could position herself as a confident and relaxed hostess, sufficiently knowledgeable to be confident her guests would enjoy the wines she served, while remaining unencumbered by the stuffiness of elitist wine snobbery.

## Conclusion

During the 1970s wine came to occupy an increasingly important place in the recreational life of the British middle classes. Earlier preoccupations with wine as a luxury good were declining, and wine’s greater affordability and availability generated popular appeal across growing sections of the middle class. *GH* magazine played a notable role in this transmission and popularisation of wine cultures. Echoing many of the popularising themes found in wider British wine literature at this time, *GH*’s discourse of informed appreciation also helped broker consumer confidence while eschewing the pretentiousness it associated with elite connoisseurship. As a 1970 entertaining manual contended ‘wine’s a fascinating subject, and a little knowledge is well worth accruing, so long as it doesn’t become the little learning that’s a dangerous thing. There’s nothing more dreary than the wine snob.’<sup>134</sup>

In illuminating these shifts, this article has problematised Warde’s framing of wine in this period as a ‘symbol . . . of extravagance’.<sup>135</sup> Nonetheless, there were certainly paradoxes and tensions in *GH*’s coverage of how to drink, buy and serve wine. Alongside a rejection of older traditions of elite authority and expertise, there remained a clear emphasis on wine drinking as a culture really best suited to affluent, educated and well travelled Europhiles. On the one hand *GH* offered education and advice for its readers, but at the same time encouraged them to feel empowered enough to trust their own judgement. These kinds of contrasting and even conflicting discourses spoke to the reconfiguration of wine’s role, as well as much broader political, social and cultural developments in a decade when Britain was renegotiating its place in Europe and class cultures were being reconfigured in new patterns.

So for all of its transformations, wine in the 1970s continued to be a positional good, and aspirational consumption remained a key influence. Exploration of *GH* content revealed didactic preoccupations with idealised performance, rather than the lived realities of readers’ experiences with wine. Evidence from social surveys of middle-class family life in the 1970s reveals (perhaps unsurprisingly) that hosting dinner parties and drinks parties could be more exasperating and exhausting than rewarding. One woman in her thirties interviewed on her view about class cultures in London suburbia despaired of the competitiveness that overshadowed entertaining in the home: ‘all those awful dinner parties! It’s never people talking to people as such; it’s married couples showing off their homes and general lifestyle to each other. The food seems to get more and more elaborate and everyone pretends not to notice it; it’s just passed over to show that we’re all accustomed to avocado pears and brandy although we dine on minced meat and Nescafé at home: it’s all so bloody false.’<sup>136</sup> Endless reciprocal invitations – the ‘demanding ping-pong match of obligations and expectations’ – might be a particular burden for less confident housewives, while the pressures of entertaining neighbours, colleagues and (especially) bosses might rattle even the experienced hostess.<sup>137</sup> The emotional

<sup>133</sup> *GH, Book of Wine*, 155.

<sup>134</sup> *GH, Cooking for Company*, 40.

<sup>135</sup> Warde, *Consumption, Food & Taste*, 117.

<sup>136</sup> Deverson and Lindsay, *Voices from the Middle Class*, 218.

<sup>137</sup> J.M. Pahl and R.E. Pahl, *Managers and Their Wives: A Study of Career and Family Relationships in the Middle Class* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1972 edn.), 143.

demands of successful entertaining might also be especially costly for the socially mobile, whose solidly working-class parents had seldom if ever drunk wine, but who were now newly thrust into a world where buying, drinking and – most of all – appreciating wine was to be expected.<sup>138</sup>

Crucially, for both old and new consumers alike, wine was a notable positional good whose appreciation cultivated social cachet via its distinctive but still ordinary status; alongside this, the socio-cultural meanings and practices attached to wine were being reconfigured. The close study of *GH* magazine revealed in particular the reframing of gendered wine cultures during the 1970s. *GH* made a notable contribution in encouraging exploration and experimentation among women consumers within the context of comfortable, middle-class domesticity. Echoing broader wine writing, *GH* helped to foster a culture which promoted women as serious consumers of wine. This was linked not only to their key role as food shoppers, but also in terms of their potential ability to appreciate good wine, meaning there was ‘no reason at all’ men should be habitually privileged over women when it came to choosing wine.<sup>139</sup>

Crucially, recurring discussions around holidays, purchasing and serving wine underlined the ways in which wine drew the continent closer to Britain, not least into their homes. *GH*'s emphasis on wine's Europeanness was significant, underpinned by both an ideal of continental urbane sophistication and an appeal towards (imagined) cultural authenticity. The discourse around European habits, customs and tastes prevailed, and in doing so *GH* steered European products into the everyday lives and homes of the middle classes. It is perhaps not so surprising that, as Britain became more politically tied to Europe in the 1970s, wine also acted as a socio-cultural bridge.

The growth and democratisation of British wine consumption continued into the 1980s and well beyond. While this article has focussed on middle-class practices, it is clear that working-class experiences of wine were also shifting in the latter decades of the century. In part this reflected the growing experience of wine drinking on European holidays, with cheap travel and package holidays ensuring a new generation of travellers had first-hand experiences of continental cuisine. While these developments merit much more scholarly attention, it is arguable that the popularisation of wine drinking among the British working classes was rooted much more in the enjoyment of wine as a drink and in popular experiences of leisure and recreation at home and abroad, than it was the social emulation of middle-class practices.<sup>140</sup>

By the late 1980s wine was hailed in popular opinion polls as ‘the most fashionable drink in the UK’.<sup>141</sup> The growth of new wine drinking cultures, including in wine bars, helped to cement its status. The ever expanding availability and affordability of wines, especially in supermarkets, helped to consolidate wine's place in working-class popular culture at home in Britain. Branded wines were important during the 1980s, their affordability a major draw. By the mid-1980s they accounted for around 15 per cent of the market, the most popular being Le Piat d'Or, a French-sounding wine created specifically for the British market. Liebfraumilch was also very popular, with key brands like Blue Nun becoming household names.<sup>142</sup> For some consumers, knowing what a wine would taste like still outweighed the potential appeal of experimenting with new varieties.

When New World wines stormed the British market in the late 1980s and 1990s wine drinkers were quick to engage with appealing and affordable varieties from across the world, including from Australia, New Zealand, California and Chile.<sup>143</sup> With Europe no longer the core focus, wine writers led consumers towards reimagining wine as a global commodity. *GH* moved with the times, keen to encourage drinkers to try new tastes, but always retaining its core emphasis on wine drinking as an emblem of social esteem.<sup>144</sup> Interestingly, despite over half a century of popular wine culture in

<sup>138</sup> Pahl and Pahl, *Managers and Their Wives*, 155.

<sup>139</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*, 14.

<sup>140</sup> Information Group Services, *Take-Home Wines*, 2–7; Akhtar and Humphries, *Some Liked It Hot*, 112–26.

<sup>141</sup> David Cox and Peter Cowling in conjunction with Gallup Poll, *Are You Normal?* (London: The Tower Press, 1989), 46.

<sup>142</sup> Information Group Services, *Take-Home Wines*, 2–7.

<sup>143</sup> Phillips, *Short History of Wine*.

<sup>144</sup> *GH*, *Book of Wine*.

Britain, wine writers continue to expound on some of the didactic themes familiar from the 1970s, including the tediousness of wine snobbery and an encouragement towards trusting one's own judgement in matters of taste and appreciation – perhaps revealing a certain preoccupation with wine's social and cultural complexity.<sup>145</sup> While numerous facets of 1970s wine culture, like the popularity of Mateus Rosé and wine and cheese parties, came to be mocked in later decades as the epitome of ersatz sophistication and later still as uncool kitsch, their historical interrogation helps uncover the social and cultural meanings attached to wine and reveals the broader impact of its popularisation in Britain, as well as illuminating a facet of Britain's relationship with, and position in, Europe.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Jancis Robinson, *The 24-Hour Wine Expert* (London: Penguin, 2017), 13–7.

<sup>146</sup> Kathleen Burk and Michael Bywater, *Is This Bottle Corked? The Secret Life of Wine* (London: Faber & Faber, 2008), 166–9; Anna Pallai, *70s Dinner Party: The Good, The Bad and the Downright Ugly of Retro Food* (London: Square Peg, 2016).