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## **Researchers Consider Factors of Wine Selection**

Laboratory devoted to wine consumer research opens at Ontario's Brock University

## by Kate Lavin

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*St. Catharines, Ontario* -- Researchers at a new consumer lab at Brock University in Ontario, Canada, are working with partners in the industry to study consumer attitudes about wine.

The Consumer Perception and Cognition Laboratory is located in Ontario's Niagara wine region and is outfitted to perform traditional research as well as focus groups, simulated consumer environments, and mapping preferences and perceptions.

Dr. Antonia Mantonakis, an associate marketing professor and consumer psychologist from the university's school of business, and Dr. Isabelle Lesschaeve, sensory scientist who recently was nominated as a fellow of the Ontario Hostelery

Institute, are leading the new program, which aims to uncover what motivates consumers to choose, buy and drink certain wines.



Neudorf says the laboratory at Brock is the first in North America to exclusively study the relationship between consumer approval and wine origins and flavors.

For example, Lesschaeve, who specializes in biological sciences, studies how sensory properties in wine influence consumer preference. To conduct more accurate research, the new lab allows her to recreate the type of situations in which consumers would typically buy wine.

"The lab's design is similar to a movie set," Lesschaeve says, "in which the environment of a wine boutique, restaurant or tasting bar can be simulated."

## Jessica Mataseje

Mantonakis, meanwhile, considers how psychological factors--such as nostalgia and previous experiences--can mold consumer patterns. She currently is studying how brief exposure to brands can affect buying decisions, and adds that the lab's research on the behavioral economics of wine provides the wine industry with insight about consumer psychology.





The Consumer Perception and Cognition Laboratory is part of the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) at Brock University. In January, Lesschaeve left her post as CCOVI director in order to focus on research at the new lab, train students and continue teaching at Brock University, where she is an associate professor of biological sciences and sensory and consumer sciences.

The Canadian Foundation for Innovation's Leading Opportunity Fund, the Ontario Research Fund, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada provided the funding to outfit the new lab.

For more information about the Consumer Perception and Cognition Laboratory, or to discuss partnering with the program, phone Neudorf at (905) 688-5550, ext. 5576, or e-mail her at <a href="mailto:eneudorf@brocku.ca">eneudorf@brocku.ca</a>.