

# Women thirst for knowledge as they buy and drink more wine

[WINE buying](#) has long been considered a male domain. Walk into a fine restaurant and the wine waiter is likely to hand the wine list to the male diner before the female.

But things are changing. Women are emerging as the main wine buyers and drinkers in households nationwide.

Recent statistics point to a trend away from the cliched "macho" wine buyer who buys trophy wines to lay down in the cellar for investment.

A Nielsen survey of Australians aged 18 and over found that more women than men had consumed wine in the previous month. The Nielsen Panorama wine consumption survey, conducted from August 2009 to July 2010, found 56.7 per cent of wine drinkers were women.

When it comes to everyday plonk to drink at home, women wield the purchasing power, another Nielsen survey found. That study found more women (54 per cent) than men (46 per cent) bought wine on their last shopping trip.

This is in line with overseas figures in countries where wine is sold in supermarkets. In Britain eight out of 10 wine purchases are made by women, and in the US about six out of 10.

In Australia, as in Britain, most wine is bought to be consumed within 48 hours, not laid down for decades in cellars, the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation says.

Sydney wine stores and restaurants report an increased thirst for wine knowledge from women.

Kim Bickley, head sommelier for Luke Mangan's Glass Brasserie at the Hilton Hotel, said women are increasingly choosing the wine.

"I never hand a man the wine list in the restaurant; we always put it in the middle of the table rather than assume it will be the man making the wine choice," she said.

Ms Bickley, who is studying for the Court of Master Sommeliers exam, one of the world's top wine qualifications, said women often have better palates for wine than men, as they are more used to identifying aromas and tastes because they still do most of the home cooking.

Women are buying higher priced wines at auction as well as being better informed these days about the sort of wine that pairs well with food, said Angus Hughson of [Cracka Wines](#) in Pymont, a wine retailer and online auction house.

"Women are much more open-minded when searching for wine," Mr Hughson said.

"There are those who know they want a [Yarra Valley chardonnay](#) or [Barossa Valley shiraz](#), but many just want a wine to suit a particular occasion or meal, and as a consequence are much more likely to take advice."

He said that when choosing wine women tend to take into account factors including [variety](#), the [region](#) or country, the [label](#), and suitability with food, whereas men tend to be more status-driven, drawn to particular brands, with price often a factor.

"Men generally want more flavourful styles - big red or powerful white wine. They also seldom ask for advice and are happy to rely much more on their own judgment than that of floor staff," he said.

*Helen Pitt | smh.com.au | September 29, 2010*

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