

The consumer response to smoke flavour in wine

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The issue

When vineyards and grapes are exposed to smoke from bushfires or controlled burns, this can result in wines with undesirable 'smoke' flavours, with 'smoky', 'burnt' or 'ashy' characters.

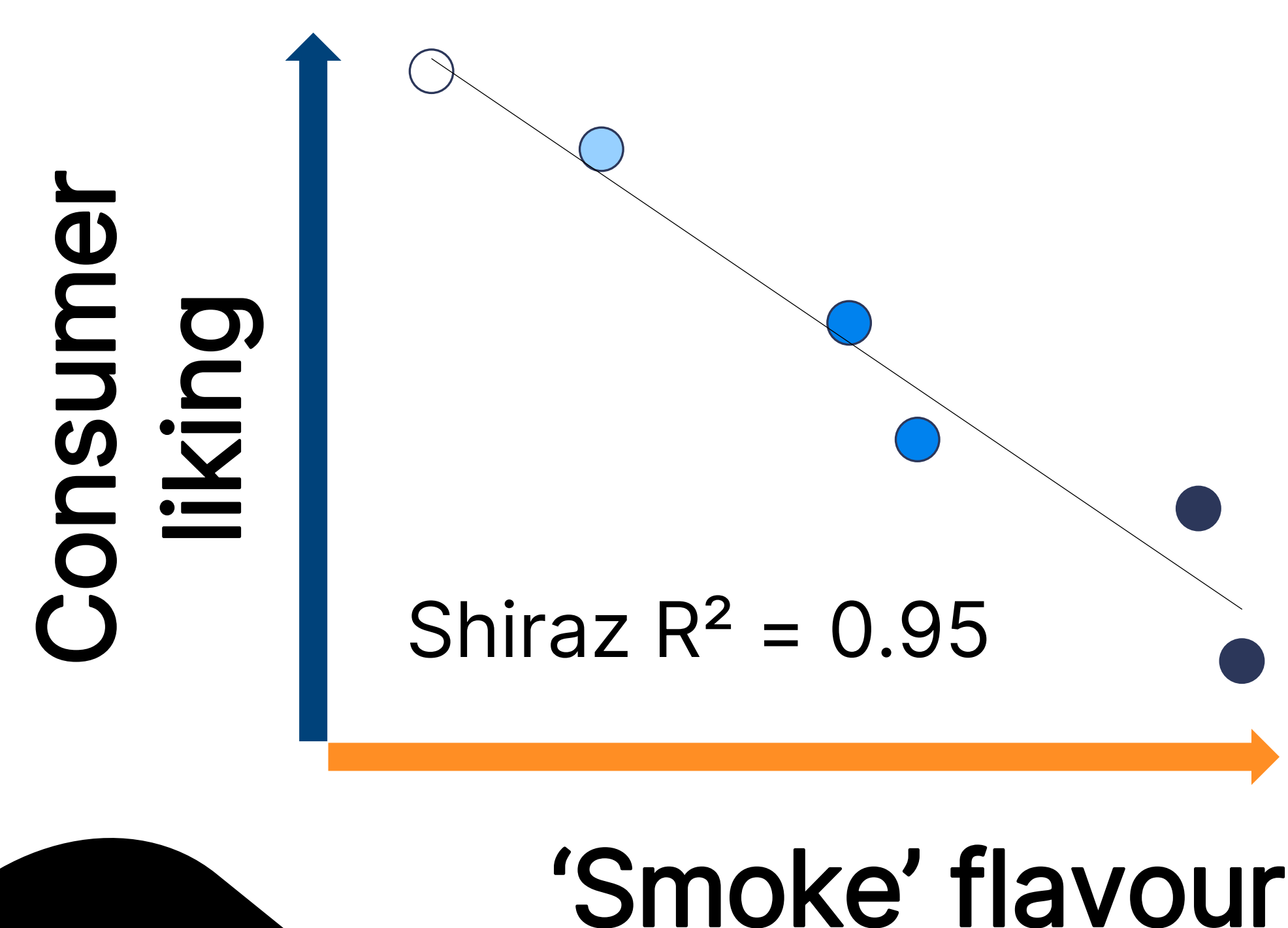
But how sensitive is the average consumer to 'smoky' flavour in wine?



A selection of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir rosé and unoaked Shiraz wines were investigated, each made from grapes with varied exposure to bushfire smoke.



Overall, wines high in 'smoke' flavour were less liked compared to non-smoky wines.



Regular consumers fell into one of three categories:

highly responsive to smoke (21-46%)

moderately responsive (33-53%) or

non-responsive (19-40%).

The outcome

While consumers varied in their response to 'smoke' character, most responded negatively to 'smoky' flavour caused by bushfires, with a proportion very sensitive to smoke.

It is a business risk to assume consumers won't care about 'smoky' wines.

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