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Come Over October™ Survey Finds an Untapped Opportunity for Wine: Give People More Reasons to Come Together

New research with partner LocalWineEvents.com finds consumers associate sharing wine with fun, friendship and connection, while 41% say an occasion could make them more likely to host friends and family

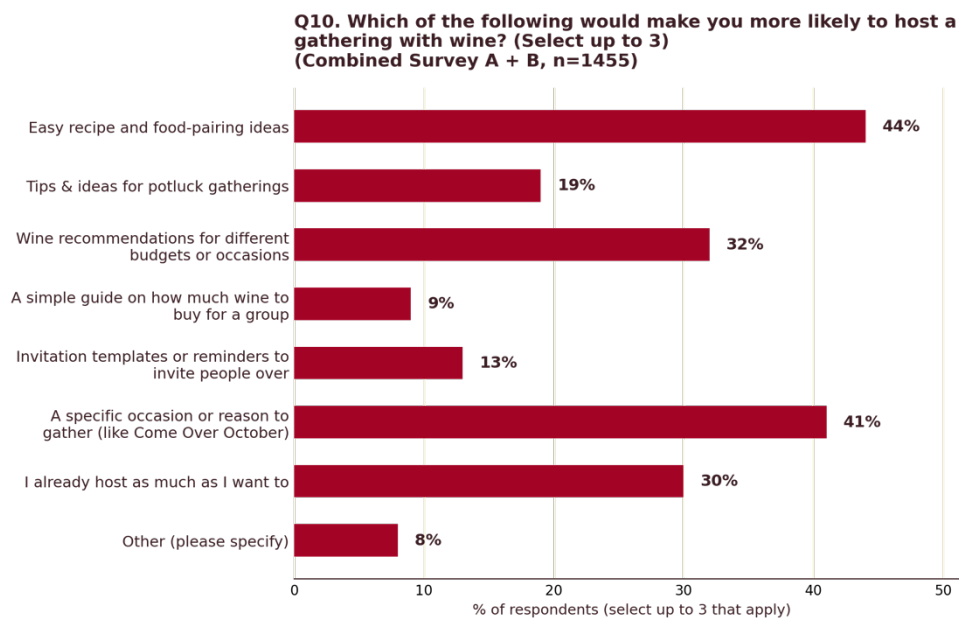
ST. HELENA, Calif., August 26, 2026 — Sometimes people simply need a reason to extend an invitation.

A new national consumer survey conducted by Come Over October™ in partnership with LocalWineEvents.com found that nearly half (41%) of respondents said having a specific occasion or reason to gather, such as Come Over October, would make them more likely to host a gathering with wine.

The finding points to an opportunity for the wine industry. Consumers continue to value spending time together and already associate wine strongly with those occasions, but busy lives, distance and cost can get in the way. A shared occasion is often all it takes.

The 2026 Wine & Gathering Study included 1,553 respondents across two surveys. Among the findings:

- Wine is already a regular part of respondents' social lives: 61% said wine is “almost always” part of their social get-togethers and another 21% said it is often, but not always. Interest in Come Over October was also strong: 55% of all survey respondents opted to receive more information about hosting a Come Over October gathering.
- When asked what would make them more likely to host a gathering with wine, 44% selected easy recipe and food-pairing ideas, 41% selected a specific occasion or reason to gather, and 32% selected wine recommendations for different budgets or occasions.
- 77% said busy schedules and finding a time that works for everyone prevent them from seeing friends and family as often as they would like. Distance was cited by 40%, the cost of going out by 33%, and the effort of hosting at home by 24%.



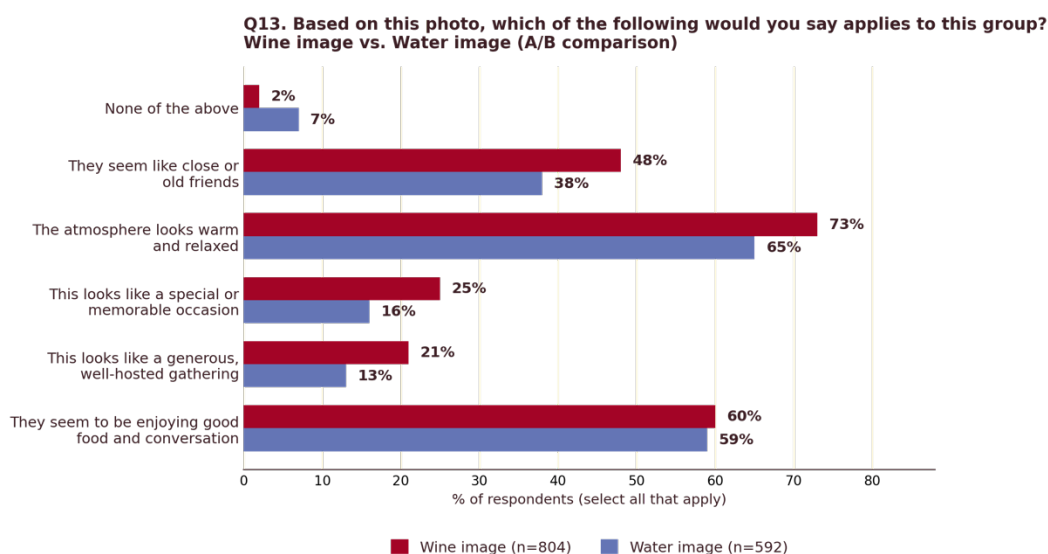
What would make respondents more likely to host a gathering with wine?

“This survey confirms that an *occasion*, like Come Over October, makes people more likely to host friends and family. Our campaign gives wineries, retailers, restaurants, distributors and regional organizations a shared occasion to offer the people who drink their wines,” said Gino Colangelo, co-founder of COME TOGETHER—A Community for Wine and president of [Colangelo & Partners](#). “When the wine community gets behind one shared invitation, it becomes very powerful, creating more moments for wine.”

What Wine Brings to the Picture

The study also explored whether the presence of wine affected how consumers perceived the same social scene. The answer was that it did. “This gets to the heart of why we created Come Over October,” said Karen MacNeil, co-founder of COME TOGETHER and author of *The Wine Bible*. “When people think about sharing wine with friends, they think about fun, conversation, friendship and connection. Those are deeply human experiences. Sometimes just inviting someone to ‘Come over’ is all the reason you need.”

In the two surveys, respondents were shown versions of the same dinner image — one group saw guests drinking wine, the other saw them drinking water. Those shown the wine version were more likely to describe the people as close or old friends (48% vs. 38%), the atmosphere as warm and relaxed (73% vs. 65%), the occasion as special or memorable (25% vs. 16%), and the gathering as generous and well-hosted (21% vs. 13%).



Perceptions of the same social scene: wine image vs. water image

The differences were statistically significant on those four measures, although the effect was modest; yet, these findings suggest an association between the presence of wine and perceptions of social connection.

Respondents’ own words reinforce that picture. When participants were asked the first word or phrase that came to mind when thinking about sharing wine with friends, “fun” was the most frequently used word, while variations of “good time” appeared roughly 100 times. Friendship, connection and togetherness emerged as the second-largest broader theme, followed by relaxation and ease. Taken together, relational themes including friendship, connection, warmth, conversation, sharing and affection appeared in roughly one-third of responses.

Connection in a Cost-Conscious Economy

KPMG’s 2026 Consumer Pulse survey found that 67% of U.S. consumers are eating at home more often than dining out, with 76% of those consumers citing budget constraints as a primary reason. The Come Over October survey, conducted among a highly wine-engaged audience, shows a more mixed picture: 26.49% said they are going out to restaurants or bars less often than they did a year ago, while 28.84% said they are getting together with friends and family at home more instead.

At the same time, respondents continue to spend money on social occasions. Nearly three-quarters (73%) said a typical get-together away from home costs them \$31 or more per person. More than half (57%) get together at a local restaurant or bar at least monthly, while 23% visit a winery, tasting room or winery event at least monthly, with another 42% doing so several times a year.

The surveys cannot establish that wine consumers are protecting spending on wine experiences relative to other discretionary purchases; however, taken together, the findings suggest that economic pressures may be changing how this wine-engaged audience socializes rather than eliminating its appetite for shared experiences.

“When the Come Over October team approached us about this research, the partnership made immediate sense,” said Eric V. Orange, founder and CEO of LocalWineEvents.com. “For more than 25 years, our job has been to help people find a reason to go somewhere and experience wine, whether that’s a winery, a tasting room, a restaurant, a wine dinner or a local event. Come Over October is built around that same idea of creating the occasion. This research gives all of us in the wine industry a better understanding of what helps turn ‘we should get together’ into an actual plan.”

For wine, the opportunity is to give consumers more reasons to connect wherever that connection happens: around the table at home, at a neighborhood restaurant or wine bar, in a tasting room or at a winery event.

Turning Consumer Insight Into an Industry Opportunity

Now entering its third year, Come Over October™ is a national campaign built around a simple invitation: ask a friend or friends to come over, share some wine and make time for one another.

For the wine industry, the new research suggests a practical role to play. Consumers don’t necessarily need a more elaborate occasion. They need an easier one: a simple reason to connect, ideas that take some of the work out of hosting, and wine choices that fit different occasions and budgets.

Come Over October gives wineries, retailers, distributors, restaurants, regional associations and other industry organizations a shared national platform around which they can create those occasions through events, tastings, communications, promotions and hospitality.

“This research gives the industry something concrete to act on,” said Kimberly Noelle Charles, DipWSET, co-founder of COME TOGETHER and president of Charles Communications Associates. “We can give people more reasons to make the invitation and make it easier for them to do so. Every part of the wine community can bring that idea to life in its own way.”

The findings announced today represent highlights from the research. A full report containing the survey results and analysis will be made available soon on the Come Over October website.

Wine industry organizations interested in participating in or supporting the 2026 Come Over October campaign can learn more at ComeOverOctober.com. Free campaign resources are available for industry activation.

“It was important to us to hear directly from consumers about what brings them together, what gets in the way and where wine fits in,” said Barbara Fitzgerald, Executive Director of Come Over October. “We’re incredibly grateful to LocalWineEvents.com for opening up their 250,000-subscriber network and helping us reach more than 1,500 wine consumers across the country, representing a range of ages, incomes and household types. These insights will help shape how Come Over October, and the broader wine industry, can create more occasions for people to connect.”

Survey Methodology

The 2026 Wine & Gathering Study was conducted by Come Over October in partnership with LocalWineEvents.com and included 1,553 respondents across two survey samples: Survey A (n=894) and Survey B (n=659). The survey was conducted among wine consumers; non-drinkers and respondents who indicated they do not drink wine were excluded from the study. Survey questions were designed in consultation with Christian Miller, Director of Research for The Wine Market Council, a non-profit 501(c)(6) research organization. The questionnaires were identical except for an image shown in two questions designed to explore whether the presence of wine affected perceptions of a social gathering. Survey A respondents were shown guests drinking wine, while Survey B respondents were shown the same scene with guests drinking water.

For questions other than the image comparison, responses from the two surveys were combined and percentages recalculated from the combined response counts. Individual question bases vary slightly due to skipped responses. The wine-versus-water analysis included 804 respondents who viewed the wine image and 592 who viewed the water image.

About COME TOGETHER—A Community for Wine Inc.

COME TOGETHER, A Community for Wine Inc. is the mission driven company behind the Come Over October and Share & Pair Sundays wine advocacy campaigns. Founded in 2024 by wine writer and author Karen MacNeil, Gino Colangelo of Colangelo & Partners, and Kimberly Noelle Charles, DipWSET, of Charles Communications Associates, the company tells the story of wine's historic and contemporary role as a beverage that brings people together.

About LocalWineEvents.com

Founded in 2000, LocalWineEvents.com connects consumers with wine, food, beer and spirits experiences in their communities and around the world, including winery and tasting room events, wine dinners, festivals, tastings and educational experiences. The platform helps consumers discover opportunities to experience wine while providing wineries, restaurants, retailers, event organizers and other members of the trade with a way to reach engaged wine consumers.

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