

S W E E T  
D R E A M S

reserved for the rich and powerful for quiet some time. It wasn't until the beginning of the 20th century that sugar became a cheap food product for the masses.

As described by Sydney W. Mintz in her book "Sweetness and Power", eating habits are very much related to social factors rather than biological factors. This means that people's diet is characteristic of the socio-cultural environment in which they are brought up or wish to belong to. The status of the foods and drinks in this complex socio-cultural environment is in constant move and very much influenced by trends and fashions in today's quickly changing society.

Top trend foods and drinks have been frowned upon after having become cheap mass produced products. Yet these crazes are reversible and the contrary has also been the case.

Let us take a look at the history of sweet wines for example. In the beginning very much appreciated by the kings and the nobles, the nectar-like luscious sweet wines have had a rather difficult time lately. They've been considered as "wines for women", in contrast to red and dry white wines, which were considered "real wines".

Yet right after World War II, sweet wines and rich foods in general became very popular. This trend towards rich food and high sugar content in foods had the negative side effect. Many wine producers unable to produce the traditional noble sweet wines would artificially increase the sugar contents of their wines, regardless of the quality in order to satisfy an increasing demand.

Of course this trend couldn't last, because the large majority of these new wines lacked the quality upon which sweet wine fame was founded. Chaptalization was very a current practice and the low quality and uninteresting taste of the final product had a very souring effect on the image of sweet wines in general. Thus in the following decades wine lovers showed more interest in dry whites and reds.

The reaction of the industry took some time and played on two fronts, on the one hand the production of red and dry white wines increased to satisfy an ever-increasing demand. On the other hand the producers of authentic traditional noble sweet wines, made enormous efforts to seduce the trendsetters of tomorrow with outstanding and sumptuous quality products. Today the world's greatest sweet wines are once again recognized for their outstanding quality and are also some of the most expensive in the world.

These high tickets are not due to financially gluttonous

**G**enerally speaking mammals, human beings included, are very sensitive to sweetness. This is most probably due to the fact that as babies our first nourishment is milk. And when thinking in terms of sweet, sour, bitter, and salty one could say that milk has a rather sweet taste. Children prefer sweet tastes to bitter our sour tastes, which is probably one of the reasons why they like sugar and candy so much.

Historically however sugar was nearly absent from most Europeans' everyday diet until the 15th century. Relatively high levels of food sweetness were exclusive to the nourishment of the elite classes. Its members could afford expensive sweet foods. Honey was one such luxury.

With the discovery of the Americas and the beginnings of colonisation, Europeans imported sugar cane. However sugar remained a luxury good

