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Wine and Cultural Differences

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Emma Libby

Spring 2022

Aix-en-Provence, France

March 29th, 2022

Wine and Cultural Differences

After speaking with one of my two wine professors here, I learned a great deal about her viewpoints and interests. As I am majoring in wine, I wanted to speak to a professor in the field I am currently on the path to joining. One thing that stays constant around the world, is that love for wine is apparent in all cultures. The lifestyle pace, in the south of France especially, is a lot slower than that of the U.S. Here, you soak up the culture, the sites, and enjoy your company. When it comes to restaurants most of the time you must ask for the check instead of the U.S they give it to you like clockwork. You're given time to enjoy the company and the environment around you. The next thing that was interesting compared to the United States, is the style of public transportation. Most people don't own their own vehicles due to the smaller streets and lack of parking. My professor lives in a town called Marseille and takes the train to and from school every workday. I found this surprising as at Linfield, most of my professors who live outside McMinnville drive their personal cars to work. She had mentioned that the main reason she chose to work at an American University in France is the exchange in cultures she gets to have with her students. Along with that, the wine program is fairly new, so to be a part of that start up including the planting of the school's vineyard has been an amazing journey so far.

The last thing that was something I didn't even think of as a difference was the formality in professional settings. This is solely based on the language. In French you have two different forms to address "you", one is a casual "Tu", and the other is formal "Vous". With that, you address your higher ups with the formal and your friends and others with the casual form. In English speaking cultures that

line is not there, as our language does not contain it. So English speaking countries are seen as more casual since that formal language does not exist.

Nothing in the interview itself has changed my perceptions of my host country and of the U.S, but my experiences here personally have. I've learned a lot while being abroad and the biggest, I've learned, is that it's okay to take life at a slow pace and enjoy it. In the U.S the consumerism and need to finish one task as soon as possible is very unhealthy. Yes, people do get work done, but the work to life balance is much greater here in France, including the closure of almost all stores on Sundays and some on Mondays as well. I'm excited to keep learning and soak up every piece of information I can while I'm abroad.