

Spin treatment tipples illegal

THE sale of a certain low alcohol wine has been banned in the UK.

Why? I found myself asking. Is it because it contains just eight per cent alcohol and you'd need to neck about three bottles before you got mildly tipsy?

Then I thought of Lambrini, which hasn't been banned, unfortunately. It is effectively pop posing as booze and the wine of preference for AA members who can go to their meetings after a session on it and say no alcohol has passed their lips without too much comeback from the big guy upstairs.

The "wine" at the centre of the argument is Sovio, which has been removed from wine lists on the orders of the Wine Standards Branch of the Food Standards Agency, FSA.

The alcohol reduction process used to make Croydon-based Sovio is "unauthorised" in the UK under EU law, although it is permitted in France and Spain. The producer

By **MIKE KELLY**

said it plans a judicial review to overturn the decision.

Sovio is a Chilean distilled wine which is shipped to Spain where the alcohol content is removed using a process called "spinning cone column".

The liquid is spun at high speeds until the alcohol separates from the remains of the wine.

A small amount of the alcohol is then returned to the drink and it is shipped to the UK for bottling and sale.

A glass of Sovio,

which was launched in June, contains about half the alcohol content of a normal wine.

Advocates say the spinning cone column technique is the only way of reducing the alcohol content of wine without harming the quality of the product.

Under EU rules it can be



made in France and Spain, although export is illegal.

A spokeswoman for the FSA said: "If re-labelled under a different name, not using the term wine in any way that may cause confusion with wine produced traditionally, it might be able to be sold in the UK."

Sovio has offered to use the description "semi-sparkling wine aerated by addition of carbon dioxide", which has been refused by the FSA.

No such problems with this week's wine, the Griffith Park Sparkling Rose.

Aimed at "discerning and aspirational young consumers", it is described as an affordable bubbly.

It has a soft pink, salmon-like colour and has a nice citrus aroma, and the flavours of strawberry and red currant are what you'd expect from a nice rose.



AFFORDABLE:
Griffith Park
Rose

On offer at Morrison's at
£4.99, reduced from £6.49.
Worth a try.