

News Release

Survey Opens the Door to China for Winemakers



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A groundbreaking survey has revealed what Chinese drinkers like about Australian red wine – giving Australia’s wine sector key information to target China’s growing market.

The Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI) carried out the survey in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou on behalf of the Australian wine sector in June this year.

The results - now released - reveal the taste preferences of Chinese wine consumers for the first time.

“The results are highly valuable in giving the Australian wine sector a guide to what types of red wines the growing Chinese market prefers,” said Professor Sakkie Pretorius, Managing Director of the AWRI.

“Previously, there was only a very sketchy idea about consumers’ taste preferences, purchase behaviour and attitudes to wine in China.

The study will allow producers to reduce their risk when they enter the Chinese market by releasing the right wines and tailoring their marketing approach.”

The survey was a feat of logistics and coordination. Over 300 bottles of red wine were flown into China just before the Olympics and 310 regular red wine consumers were recruited across the three cities.

Each consumer tasted 14 wines in a blind test comparing Australian and international red wines. The results reveal that most of the Australian wines were very well liked, while Chinese wine was least liked. A market-leading French wine was also not well liked.

To obtain a sensory profile of each wine, and provide further information to winemakers, an expert sensory panel also evaluated the wines.

The results reveal that Chinese consumers preferred fruity, berry, and vanilla-flavoured Australian wines with a touch of sweetness.

“We also found out valuable information about different groups of Chinese wine consumers. Not all Chinese consumers like the same wines,” said Dr Leigh Francis from the AWRI.

Dr Francis led the study with Dr Patricia Osidacz from the AWRI and Jane Robichaud from Tragon Corporation, a market research company based in California.

“We found there were three different groups with the same taste preferences. One group, around half the total, liked lighter wines, while a third liked the wines with

some sweetness and didn't like wines that were sour or drying in taste," said Dr Francis.

"The last group, around 20 per cent of the taste-testers, preferred more strongly flavoured, richer wines. They are more likely to be newer wine consumers."

Compared with results from other AWRI taste tests involving Australian consumers, the survey shows that China's wine market requires a different strategy.

The AWRI surveys have revealed that 40 per cent of Australians prefer strongly flavoured, richer wines and 40 per cent prefer lighter, fruity wines. The rest prefer Cabernet Sauvignon wines with some greener flavour characters.

#### About the AWRI

The Australian Wine Research Institute, established in 1955, aims to advance the competitive edge of the Australian grape and wine sector through the delivery of world class research, development, extension and service activities.

The survey of Chinese consumers was conducted on behalf of the Australian wine sector with funding from the Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation.

#### For further information

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