

## Wines of Germany plans significant UK investment

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The German Wine Institute is “significantly” increasing its UK investment to boost its burgeoning growth of the above £5 price bracket.

The country is still losing volumes in the UK - they are down 17% against the overall UK decline of 3% - but the body is confident it is nearing the tipping point and will start to see volumes go up soon.

“We always lose volume much quicker than value,” said Nicky Forrest, managing director of Wines of Germany in the UK. But she is hopeful that “maybe in the next 12-18 months we will reach the tipping point and will start increasing volumes.”

Forrest says most of the volume decrease has been at the below £4 level. Its value stands at £11.9 million, down only 2% on 2011.

When it comes to Germany’s volumes sales by price point, the below-£4 section of the market has declined by 23% from 75% in 2010 to 55% to the end of May 2012, according to Nielsen. Meanwhile the £5+ market has grown by 36% from 7.4% to 16.8%.

German Riesling reaches an average price point of £6.47, ahead of the average bottle price of £4.90, according to Nielsen MAT figures to the end of June 2012. Its Riesling wines also have 57% of the overall Riesling market here, up 9 percentage points on 2011.

The generic body unveiled its marketing plans for the UK for 2013 which will focus on Riesling and Pinot Noir. It has recruited three “Riesling Revivalists” to spread the word on the variety. Writers Anne Krebiehl and Matt Walls and lawyer-turned-sommelier Alex Down will “evangelise” about the variety to consumers.

It will launch a Dragon’s Den-style competition called “Get it on” where winemakers pitch their UK-specific German wines to trade experts with prizes including listings and financial support from Wines of Germany on offer.

It is also relaunching its Riesling Fellowship after a five-year hiatus, which will see Riesling producers and ambassadors from around the world recognised by the German Embassy, similar to the Gran Orden de Caballeros for services to Spanish wine.

Also planned for next year is a gastronomic tie-in with a number of food festivals and masterclasses on German wine with Jeannie Cho Lee MW.

In addition it plans to grow its Riesling Summit, and double the size of its 31 Days of German Riesling promotion, which attracted 50 trade outlets this year.

The UK is the country’s biggest export market for wine, following the USA.