



Asia takes to Kiwi wine

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A new market is emerging for New Zealand winemakers as eastern cultures develop a taste for the Kiwi drop.

Asia is the world's fastest-growing wine market and it's one New Zealand winemakers want to be a part of, following recent economic struggles.

In 2008 the continent consumed 1.3 billion bottles of wine, and it was predicted that would grow by 25% over the following five years.

New Zealand exports more than \$50 million worth of wine to Asia each year, which is five times more than what it did a decade ago.

Jeannie Cho-Lee, wine writer and critic from Hong-Kong, said wine has quickly become more popular in Asia.

"It's very common now to see wine in your average family style Chinese restaurant ... whereas even just a decade ago, it was hard to find," she said.

Winemaker, Kate Radburn, said the new market has opened up plenty of business opportunities for New Zealand vineyards.

"We have a population base that I think we can't even begin to comprehend, and absolutely unlimited opportunities if we get the relationships right."

Cho-Lee said while demand for wine in Asia is on the rise, Kiwi winemakers need to be aware of business cultural differences to make the most of opportunities.

So she is in New Zealand to tell kiwi winemakers how to make the "make it" in the Asia wine market.

Nigel Avery from Sileni Estate said business deals take longer in Asia than in New



Zealand.

"You know New Zealand, a good old shake of the hand, back of an envelope and we've done a deal. Over there it takes a bit longer, and Taiwan, Japan, Korea, China, they've all got their own cultures within that as well," he said.

Another challenge for winemakers is to appeal to a new taste preferences.

"You know we hear stories of wineries perhaps adding more concentrate to sweeten up the product for certain markets," Avery said.

Cho-Lee said "umami", which sensory scientists identify as a fifth "taste" alongside bitter, salty, sour and sweet, is a popular flavour across the board.

"How that translates into appreciation for wine is perhaps that there's going to be a greater appreciation for subtlety, finesse, nuances, because if you look at that flavour of umami...it's much more a subtle integration, or 'harmony', of flavours," Cho-Lee said.

John Hoare, viticultural real estate agent, said there is interest from Asia in Kiwi vineyards.

"We have had many coming out and inspecting properties, which never used to happen in the viticultural properties, it's a recent thing...maybe two inspections a month."

New Zealand's Overseas Investment Office recently approved applications from Asian investors to buy several vineyards in Hawke's Bay, and Marlborough.