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Chinese consumers “waking up” to imported wine - but find it difficult to understand

China’s newly wealthy consumers are waking up to the pleasures of imported wine, according to a new report out today from Wine Intelligence.

Wine consumers in China say they enjoy the sophistication and feelings associated with drinking a good bottle of imported wine, and are finding more room for it in their everyday lives, according to the *Wine Intelligence China Landscape* report.

The report predicts that the number of Chinese consumers who could afford to buy imported wine regularly will rise from around 23 million in 2010 to 80 million in 2025.

However international brands may miss out on this growth opportunity because consumers still find the process of buying imported wine very difficult. While international hypermarkets such as Carrefour and Tesco now carry a large range of imported wines, there is very little user-friendly information on the shelf or on the bottle to help guide consumers to the right choice.

As a result many Chinese consumers still stick to domestic wines, which they acknowledge are often lower quality than imported wines, but at least tell them, in their own language, what the product is and how it might taste.

“I think most of the wine industry round the world would agree that Asia in general, and China in particular, represent a colossal opportunity for sales growth over the next 20-30 years,” said Richard Halstead, COO of Wine Intelligence and project manager for the China Landscape report.

“Yet the closer you get to the market, the more you see that global brand owners have a lot of work still to do, both in terms of distribution and product positioning, to really engage with Chinese consumers.”

He added: “We can be pretty certain that demand for wine will grow exponentially in the next decade with the increasing wealth among Chinese urban professionals. The question is: whose wine will they be drinking?”

The 150-page China Landscape report details the wine usage, and attitudes towards wine, of Chinese upper middle class consumers who can afford to buy imported wine. The report draws on extensive quantitative and qualitative primary research conducted by Wine Intelligence in November and December 2009.

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Report details:

The China Landscape report is published by Wine Intelligence today, 4th February 2010, 150pp, as a .pdf download. Price is £3,500.

About Wine Intelligence Ltd

Wine Intelligence is the leading research-led strategy consultancy serving the global wine industry. It conducts client-specific research projects to enable companies to gain greater insights into wine markets and wine consumers, and helps business leaders develop business strategy and marketing plans. The company also assists businesses in developing new brands, and in formulating and communicating marketing messages within the industry. For more information, please visit www.wineintelligence.com.

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