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Date: 10/30/2013

GAIN Report Number: TW13040

Taiwan

Post: Taipei ATO

Taiwan Wine Market Grows More Diverse

Report Categories:

Wine

Export Promotion Programs

Market Promotion/Competition

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Report Highlights:

On September 27, 2013, the Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Taipei featured over 30 U.S. wines from California, Idaho, New Jersey, and Oregon at the International Wine Promotion, which was hosted by the Imports and Exporters Association of Taipei (IEAT). The event successfully attracted over 300 wine lovers from the foodservice sector and the general public. This is the third year that the IEAT has organized this wine event, and it provides an opportunity for wine exporters to test the Taiwan market. In 2012, wine exports from the United States to Taiwan totaled \$10 million.

General Information:

The Imports and Exporters Association of Taipei (IEAT) held its annual International Wine Promotion on September 27, 2013. The event offered over 300 wine enthusiasts an exceptional opportunity to taste a variety of wines from 14 countries: Austria, Canada, Chile, Czech, France, German, Hungry, Italy, Portugal, Slovak, South Africa, Spain, Turkey, and the United States. This is the third year for the IEAT to organize the International Wine Promotion, which provides wine exporters an opportunity to test the Taiwan market. The event also grants importers a chance to meet one-on-one with various winery representatives.

Many of the wine participants stated they were amazed with the diversity of U.S. grape and fruit wines from California, Idaho, New Jersey, and Oregon. The U.S. wines represented at the tasting included: Apothic, Barefoot, Domaine Serene, Elk Cove, Firesteed, Hall, Honig, Koenig, Merry Edwards, Turning Leaf, and Tomasello.

Most Taiwan consumers are not traditional wine drinkers; therefore, they are not able to distinguish a sizable difference between grape varieties. The majority of entry-level consumers prefer dark-colored, full-bodied wines. However, most women seem to prefer sweeter wines with a fruitier aftertaste. The Taiwan culture regards the color "red" as a symbol of luck, which appears to have a direct impact on the wine market with red wine (aka, grape wine) accounting for around 80% of the market share. The most popular red wines are Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz. In the white wine grape varieties, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc are most popular.

However, at this year's event, there seemed to be a growing interest in sweeter wines with a unique history. As a result, ice wine was remarkably more popular this year than it was last year. Even though ice wine is considered a niche wine, the growth potential could be significant over the next several years. After sampling various ice wines, wine samplers were intrigued with the diversity in grape varietal selection, production methods, and tastes. While consumers in the past may have associated ice wine with only Canada, many in the market now recognize quality ice wines from Austria, Hungary, and the United States (Idaho).



ATO Taipei participated in the IEAT-organized International Wine Tasting, which received support from 14 country trade offices in Taiwan.