

PROMOTION NOTES

FRENCH WINE EXPORTS TO THE U.S. ON THE UPSWING



French wines are returning to U.S. shelves.

It's no secret that over the past few years, French wine producers have been grappling with some serious issues concerning exports to the U.S. – from a weak dollar, which forced French wine prices up, to the domination of less expensive, more “consumer-friendly” New World wines, to other influences. However, French wine sales in the U.S. are now on the rebound! In 2006 the increase has really gained momentum: French wine exports to the U.S. are up +19% in volume and +21.5% in value over the first eight months of 2006, compared with the same period in 2005.



Several French wine regions in particular are driving this new trend over this same period:

- BORDEAUX: +34% volume and +94% value vs. 2005
- CÔTES DE PROVENCE: +38% volume and +34% value vs. 2005
- CÔTES DU RHÔNE: +30% volume and +37% value vs. 2005

What has contributed to the resurgence in French wine exports to the U.S.? The efforts of French wine producers to become more consumer-oriented, more aggressive marketing, and a stronger focus on American customers and their needs, including a Wines of France campaign that relies heavily on the help of Sheri Sauter Morano, one of only three American women to hold the Master of Wine title. In addition, the 2004 – 2005 vintages of all French wines have received largely excellent ratings in the American press, and American consumers have become increasingly knowledgeable about fine food and wine, enabling them to appreciate the quality inherent in these French products.

Source: Ubifrance Datas

FOOD SAFETY NEWS

THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES LAUNCHES “FRENCH FOOD SAFETY” WEBSITE

The French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries announced the launch of an educational website, **FrenchFoodSafety.com**, for professionals and consumers alike. Visitors will be able to access the most up-to-date news and information about the safety, rules and practices that govern French agriculture and food production – for both domestic and international markets. **FrenchFoodSafety.com** provides a “Safety Plan for French Food”, including:

- *A Real Expertise* communicates facts and statistics regarding French agricultural production and consumption;

- *Five Guiding Principles* outlines the predominant thinking shared by all players in the supply chain that guides food safety policy in France;

- *Who Does What? Who Checks What?* explains the monitoring system from the government to the laboratories, and the objectives of each group;

- *Traceability & Transparency* illustrates the Ministry's endeavor to ensure complete knowledge about the origin of ingredients and materials used to make any French food product;

- *A Shared Responsibility* profiles the players in the food production chain who work together to

assure consumers and professionals of the quality and safety of French products, both in France and abroad.

Also available to be downloaded from the website (in 12 different languages!) is an 18-page Food Safety System Guide. This report provides a thorough introduction to France's food safety program by showcasing the organizations and key players involved and their various responsibilities in maintaining food safety.

FrenchFoodSafety.com aims to be the most current and comprehensive source of information to ensure the safety of all French agricultural products “from the field to the plate!”

PROMOTION NOTES

EAT SWEEPS THE AMERICAN FANCY FOOD SHOWS

European Authentic Tastes – EAT – successfully kicked off year 3 of a 3€ million (\$3,860,000) campaign at this summer's New York Fancy Food Show, July 9 – 11, 2006. Funded by the European Union, EAT aims to inform Americans about the importance of Protected Designated Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) and Certified Organic classifications as assurances of authenticity and quality. Highly visible with a realistic-looking “European Marketplace” (an 800-square-foot stand), EAT served up over 80 designated products from 14 EU countries over the course of the show. Ari Weinzwieg, noted food expert and owner of Zingerman's in Ann Arbor, MI, guided attendees through a tasting of delicious “European Giants and Undiscovered Gems”



EAT “Marketplace” booth at the NY Fancy Food Show.

including French Roquefort and Styrian Pumpkin Seed Oil from Austria. He said, “The EU designations provide retailers with a guarantee that they are buying the genuine products.”

Next on the EAT calendar is the “EAT Your Way Through 2007” calendar, featuring delectable food photography and 12 months of retailing and sales promotion tips. Inserted in the November issues of *Specialty Food* and *The Gourmet Retailer*, copies will also be distributed at EAT's next major

event, the Winter Fancy Food Show (January 21 – 23, 2007 in San Francisco), and will be included in an EAT education kit available at eu-authentic-tastes.com.



Over 80 designated products were displayed.

EVENTS 2007

Winter Fancy Food Show,
San Francisco, CA
South Beach Wine & Food
Festival, Miami, FL

JANUARY 21 –23

FEBRUARY 23 –25

MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

BORDEAUX WINES PARTNER WITH WHOLE FOODS FOR A PERFECT PAIRING



Building Bordeaux awareness at Whole Foods.

As part of a multi-million dollar campaign to promote Bordeaux wines nationally with liquor and grocery chains, Bordeaux/Nicolas Wines (Castel) launched their first ever partnership with the world's largest retailer of natural and organic foods, Whole Foods Market. Their 2-month "Spring Bordeaux Festival" promotion ran in April – May 2006 with 64 on-site and off-site tasting demonstrations. In addition to the tastings, 121 Whole Foods stores promoted Bordeaux wines through POS materials including mounted maps, shelf-talkers, case talkers, food pairing signs, tasting notes, Bordeaux banners, aprons, and "10 Key Points" flyers. All were designed to educate consumers, build awareness and appreciation of Bordeaux wines, and encourage consumers to enhance their grocery shopping experience by considering which Bordeaux wines to pair with their favorite foods.

The results of this promotional partnership far surpassed expectations. Whole Foods quadrupled its Bordeaux selection for this year – from 3 to 12 wines – the largest increase in the imported wine category. Bordeaux wine sales increased, attributed primarily to the tastings. "Most of the Whole Foods consumers were happy to stop, taste and compare before buying," said Virginie Farias, Bordeaux Brand Ambassador.

Whole Foods was the first promotion in the larger, multi-million dollar Bordeaux campaign, which will be launching other big national stores as well as on-premise promotions at various chains.

SPOTLIGHT

INTERVIEW WITH BOBBY KACHER

Through the Grapevine recently interviewed Bobby Kacher of Robert Kacher Selections, a U.S. importer of mainly French wines.

TTG: Do you remember your first time trying French wine?

BK: I was 20, backpacking with a Eurailpass, drinking lots of cheap wine. Going to France opened my eyes to a culture completely different from my own. I returned the next summer and it had a long-term effect.

TTG: How did you get started in the wine business?

BK: While at the University of Maryland, I got a job in Crown Wine & Spirits, a shop on Dupont Circle in DC. In those days, I'd seen more of French wine culture than most people



Bobby Kacher takes in the bouquet.

in the business.

TTG: Your importing company is unique in that your portfolio is almost 100% French. Why did you choose to import mainly French wines?

BK: When you travel in France, the classics (grapes) are French. For me it was a very natural pursuit to see if I could master that. If you were going to be an importer back then, you didn't look at anything else. I was

interested in small growers, farming families.

TTG: You have a very special relationship with your suppliers. How do you choose them?

BK: By what's in the tank or the bottle... based on raw material... I talk to farmers about other people they know.

TTG: How many times a year do you visit them?

BK: I spend three months a year in France. You knock on doors, see a good site, take the time to introduce yourself. I go three, sometimes four times a year.

TTG: What else is unique about Robert Kacher Selections?

BK: Our approach. Selection of the product has always been done by a feeling, a mission. I would make blends in France and bring them home. I still make all the cuvées. We've always kept the same per-

spective: all estate-grown wines. That way, you can select your own lots. I buy barrels and give them to growers as needed, taking an artisanal approach to grower-made wines.

TTG: What are the challenges currently facing French wines in the American market? Where do you see them in 5 to 10 years?

BK: The AOC system holds you back. Small fine wine importers have not poured money into marketing. I have to maintain quality or I can't do this. France is still a player. There was a time when it was probably easier for France because you didn't have Chile, Argentina, etc. France will never compete volumetrically with what can be done in the New World, so France should just do what it does best: continue to make great wines.

MINISTRY NEWS

FRANCE SHOWCASES ITS FOOD AND WINE

France is bringing its influential French gastronomic offerings, their diversity and excellent quality/price relationship to the American festival circuit. The goal: to reposition French food, wines and spirits as accessible, convivial and "friendly." In order to instill a dynamism into the French food/wine/spirits category, the French Ministry of Agriculture – with SOPEXA USA as its stateside marketing partner – is bringing a wide array of these products to events of worldwide stature that reach the American trade and press, as well as consumers.

24th Annual Aspen Food & Wine Classic in Aspen

On behalf of the French Ministry of Agriculture, SOPEXA USA participated in the 24th Annual Aspen Food & Wine Classic, June 16 –18, 2006. 5,000 visitors paid an entrance fee of \$900 to attend this highly-regarded and very upscale event. In addition to the Ministry's added visibility in the official program, their booth was also well situated, right between the Moët Hennessy Group and Wynn Restaurants, ensuring a great deal of



Lined up and ready for tasting.

enthusiastic traffic. The public was further enticed by the participation of the incomparable Bernard Sun, Corporate Beverage Director for the Jean Georges Restaurant Group, who greeted visitors over the three-day period. In addition, word was spread through a full page ad in the July 2006 *Food & Wine*.

"Le French Weekend" EPCOT Food & Wine Festival 2006

This fall, the French Ministry of Agriculture became a title sponsor of the 11th annual Epcot International Food & Wine Festival, September 29 – November 12, 2006. SOPEXA USA organized the "kick-off" with a French 3-day weekend featuring a variety of exceptional food and wine seminars, tastings and special VIP events – highlighting the unparalleled richness and

variety of the French food, wines and spirits offering.

2007 South Beach Wine & Food Festival

The French Ministry of Agriculture will debut as a sponsor of this highly visible media event, the South Beach Wine & Food Festival, February 23 – 25, 2007. This show has been steadily growing and is now celebrating its 6th anniversary with the Food Network as its title sponsor. This year, celebrity chefs Daniel Boulud, Emeril Lagasse, Bobby Flay, Rachel Ray, and Eric Ripert will be making guest appearances. France will be front and center with its grand "French Tent," a 2,500-square-foot arena boasting an exclusive group of exhibitors representing French gastronomy and lifestyle at its best. The festival promises to attract over 13,000 attendees, including 3,000 trade professionals and 10,000 upscale consumers, all of whom love the finer things in life.



French wine and food: wintering in South Beach.