

Pairings with a Chinese accent



Seminars at VinExpo Asia-Pacific 2012 offer a new slant on matching Chinese dishes with wines

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Special to The Nation
Hong Kong July 30, 2012 1:00 am*

More than 15,000 wine & spirits buyers and professionals from around the world converged on Hong Kong at the end of May for VinExpo Asia-Pacific 2012, making it the most successful in the event's history.

The three-day trade only expo drew 1,050 exhibitors from 28 countries and enjoyed strong support from Hong Kong as well as increases in visitors from Japan, Thailand, Taiwan, Malaysia and China.

Robert Beynat, VinExpo's chief executive, said he'd sniffed the sweet smell of success during the lead-up promotional campaign in Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai, Beijing, and Taipei and Hong Kong.

"I could sense that the knowledge and sophistication of the markets had grown tremendously from two years ago, and this was reflected in the business buzz and atmosphere of this year's show."

Visitors had the opportunity to share their VinExpo experience with great wine makers, owners and notable guests including former winners of the "Best Sommelier in the World" title, Masters of Wine Bob Campbell, Charles Curtis, Susan Hulme, Jeannie Cho Lee, Debra Meiburg, Caro Maurer and Lynne Sherriff, and world renowned winemaker and personality Michel Rolland.

Cho Lee led an innovative seminar titled "Discovering Tea flavours in Piedmont wines". She showcased 10 representative Piedmont wines and described them using 5 tea flavours and descriptors. Cho Lee invited Tea Master, Vesper Chan, one of Hong Kong's most highly regarded and experienced tea educators, to share his knowledge about the ancient art of Chinese tea.

In addition to telling stories about the teas, Chan commented on each wine with a Chinese tea flavour. He described 2007 Malvira Roero Riserva Trinita DOCG with a White tea flavour, the 2008 Paitin Sori Paitin Barbaresco DOCG with Longjing green tea and jasmine tea and 2007 Fontanafredda La Rosa Barolo DOCG with White Peony tea and Pu'er tea. This showcase was perfect for the Chinese to become familiar with wine aromas.

The VinExpo Asia-Pacific Academy featured more than 60 tastings, seminars and presentations by experts and industry specialists. Academy participants also increased from 6,000 people in 2010 to approximately 8,000 participants.

"The fact that we have increased our exhibition space by 25 per cent and still can't meet the demand is very encouraging," said the event's chair Dominique Hriard Dubreuil.

"The Asia-Pacific market, while maturing, still has great potential for growth and VinExpo Asia-Pacific remains firmly the premium choice for professionals in the wine and spirits industry.

VinExpo is the world's largest wines and spirits trade exhibition and is staged annually in alternative years between Bordeaux and Hong Kong. VinExpo 2013 will be held in Bordeaux from June 16 to 20.