



Hong Kong offers trading platform for Italian winemakers and distributors through rapidly growing wine fair

Co-operation Agreement between Hong Kong Trade Development Council and Veronafiere ensures strong Italian presence at HKTDC Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair 2012

(26 Mar 2012) Wine appreciation in Asia has surged in recent years, with Hong Kong's highly successful Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair playing a key role. The participation of Italy's wine industry has contributed significantly to the success of the fair and to the regional public's enthusiasm for quality wine.

Mr Benjamin Chau, Deputy Executive Director of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), which organises the fair, is visiting Italy from 24 to 29 March, 2012, to deepen this collaboration.

During his visit, Mr Chau will sign a Co-operation Agreement with Veronafiere, which organised Italy's presence as Partner Country at Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair 2011 and ensured the largest participation by Italy to date. "I am delighted to sign this very comprehensive Co-operation Agreement with Veronafiere. We have had a highly successful collaboration in the past and in acknowledging our appreciation of Veronafiere's contribution, I am pleased to say that this Agreement will enhance our future co-operation."

"Italy is the world's leading producer of wine and exerts great influence in the industry and on the wine market. In 2011, Italy hosted the fair's largest group pavilion, with more than 200 exhibitors, up 80% over 2010. Buyers from Italy, too, increased by 86%."

"Wine is an increasingly important trade element as Hong Kong emerges as the wine trade hub of Asia," said Mr Chau. "Last year, Hong Kong's total imports of wine from Italy were valued at EUR21 million, showing almost 40% growth compared with 2010."

Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair

In 2011, the Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair attracted over 930 exhibitors from 37 countries & regions and 19,400 trade buyers from 71 countries & regions, both exhibitor and buyer numbers up 37% over 2010.

In addition to trading, the fair facilitates wine appreciation among consumers through its open day, to which 19,690 public visitors came in 2011, up 38% over 2010.

Exhibitors showcased a wide range of wine, spirits, beer and other beverages, along with

products and services related to production and logistics, accessories and equipment. Wine education, tourism and investment exhibitors are also represented.

Italy was prominent as Partner Country in 2011. Fair highlights included the VINO Sangiovese Forum, as well as a special tasting area at the pavilion. Veronafiere also organised wine-pairing cooking demonstrations by Michelin-starred chefs and a forum on Italian wine. The fair's Gala Wine Dinner had an Italian theme.

The fair hosts the Cathay Pacific Hong Kong International Wine & Spirit Competition, organised jointly with the London-based International Wine & Spirit Competition (IWSC). 2011 saw the inclusion of spirits categories and a record-breaking total of more than 1,700 entries. The guest VIP judge was famous Italian oenologist and winemaker Alberto Antonini.

Hong Kong and Italy

Veronafiere will once again organise the pavilion at Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair 2012, taking place 8-10 November at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. Veronafiere will promote Italian wines through food and wine events and assist Italian traders to tap into the Chinese mainland market using Hong Kong as their hub.

"I look forward to this opportunity to share with Italian winemakers and distributors the success of the Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair and to explore with them, and with other Italian business representatives, the many advantages of Hong Kong as a trading platform through HKTDC events," said Mr Chau.

"It is not only the wine fair that attracts interest from Italy. Between 2009 and 2011, nearly 1,000 Italian exhibitors joined various HKTDC trade fairs, while more than 15,000 buyers from Italy visited the fairs," reported Mr Chau.

"Italian participation in HKTDC fairs reflects our trade relations," said Mr Chau. "In 2011, Hong Kong imported goods worth EUR4.4 billion from Italy, a 29% growth over 2010, including jewellery (10%), footwear (5%) and watches & clocks (3%)."

Italy's influence as a leader in fashion and lifestyle product design and branding is felt not only in Hong Kong but in the Chinese mainland. Mainland consumers are rapidly creating a sophisticated and discerning market for branded luxury goods and lifestyle products such as wine.

For Italian traders this offers enormous possibilities. Hong Kong's established position as a regional fashion capital, renminbi offshore centre and global listing hub for fashion and lifestyle brands is the launchpad for entering this vast market.

Fair website: www.hktdc.com/hkwinefair

Media Enquiries

Please contact the HKTDC Milan Office:

Francesca Toschi

Tel: 39-(02)-865405

E-mail: francesca.toschi@hktdc.org