



Hong Kong, the wine trading and distribution hub in Asia, offers access to global markets for UK wine industry players

(18 May 2011) Hong Kong's emergence as Asia's premier wine trading and distribution hub creates the potential for significant business expansion for UK wine industry players. Mr Benjamin Chau, Deputy Executive Director of Hong Kong Trade Development Council, is visiting London from May 17 to 19 to outline ways in which market expansion can be achieved.

"Hong Kong has established itself as a major wine hub," said Mr Chau, "with impetus from the abolition of import duty on wine in 2008. Looking at some of the indicators, we can see how strongly Hong Kong has built on this.

"In 2010, total value of wine imports into Hong Kong exceeded GBP546 million, an increase of 73% over 2009. With particular reference to the United Kingdom, wine worth GBP76 million was exported from the UK to Hong Kong in 2010, a growth of 75% over the previous year, making it Hong Kong's second largest wine source."

Hong Kong also surpassed New York to become the world's largest wine auction centre in 2010.

The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has signed Memoranda of Understanding on Co-operation with 12 wine-producing countries or regions, including recent signings with Chile, the Burgundy region of France, Portugal and the United States.

A major initiative has been the move to establish high quality wine storage venues. In late 2009, Hong Kong launched the world's first wine storage management certification scheme for companies whose wine storage facilities meet certain international standards. Up to May 2010, nine local companies have received certification with more applications being processed.

In London Mr Chau visits the London International Wine & Spirits Fair where he meets with wine traders, distributors and media. He also meets with Allen Gibbons, Director of Cathay Pacific Hong Kong International Wine and Spirit Competition, which has a key role in the Competition, a highlight of the HKTDC Hong Kong International Wine and Spirits Fair. Some 1,300 wines from around the world were judged by a pan-Asian panel in the 2010 competition, making it the world's first authentically Asian wine competition, and its largest.

Mr Chau said that the inauguration of the HKTDC Hong Kong International Wine and Spirits Fair in 2008 was a vital element in Hong Kong's successful emergence as a wine hub.

"The fair has gone from strength to strength. Exhibitor numbers have grown nearly 30% over 2009, with 680 exhibitors from 30 countries and regions. We welcomed over 14,000 trade buyers, an increase of over 19%. The fair opens to the public on the last day and in 2010 received over 14,000 non-trade visitors, a 15% increase over 2009, an indication of the tremendous consumer enthusiasm for wine in Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland."

The 2011 Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair will feature Italy as Partner Country. This tradition began with France, followed by Australia, establishing an Old World-New World sequence of Partner Countries.

HKTDC is one of the world's leading exhibition organisers. In London Mr Chau is also meeting with UK Trade and Investment as well as organisations relevant to other Hong Kong-based trade events. These include the Association of British Medical Industries, the UK Green Building Council, the British Educational Suppliers Association and the British Council.

Between 2008 and 2010, a total of 392 UK exhibitors and 18,669 buyers visited HKTDC fairs.

"By staging more than 30 trade fairs every year, covering a wide range of industries, HKTDC offers the best one-stop platform for buyers to source new and innovative products, as well as a great channel for exhibitors to expand their business by presenting their latest items as well as promote their brand image. We look forward to welcoming more and more UK exhibitors and buyers in the future at our fairs," concluded Mr Chau.

Fair website: www.hktdc.com/hkwinefair

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