

Meeting the test, Jiebaina now sold by UK's Waitrose

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China-made goods, including some high-end products, have become increasingly popular in the United Kingdom, but that was not the case for Chinese wines until recently.

Waitrose, the sixth-largest grocery retailer in the UK, began to sell Changyu Jiebaina in its chain of supermarkets on Aug 28, a landmark for the Chinese wine industry.

With a warrant to supply wines and spirits to the British royal family, Waitrose has 280 outlets across the UK. A bottle of Changyu Jiebaina — also known as Changyu Cabernet

Gernischt 2011 — is priced at 9.99 pounds (\$16.2).

Chinese wines have been better accepted by global consumers in recent years, but only a few including Changyu have a chance to win over discerning consumers.

Guy Woodward, editor of Decanter magazine, said that "China is already the fifth-largest wine producer in the world and while much of the quality is pretty mediocre, it's inevitable that at the top end, as know-how improves (often via the employment of overseas consultants) and the best regions are identified, it will start turning out some decent wines worthy of export".

Woodward said he has tried

Changyu Jiebaina and it is among the worthy.

Katie Mollet, a senior purchasing manager at Waitrose, said the retailer "is bringing in a new era as interest in the Chinese wine industry continues to grow".

"We scour the world to find exciting new wines and were particularly impressed by the Cabernet Gernischt 2011 from Changyu," she said.

Mollet said she hopes Waitrose will help raise the profile of Chinese wines among UK consumers.

"The Changyu is a great wine to drink with a Friday night takeaway, perfect with Chinese style beef with ginger and spring onion," she said.

Top quality

Before it can be shipped to European markets, the wine has to pass strict quality standards whose 55 indicators include testing for pesticide residue and heavy metals.

When the wine arrives at customs in its destination country it is inspected by the quarantine organization, and before it reaches the supermarket shelves, it will be inspected again by local officials.

Statistics from the export department at Changyu show its wines have been sold in 28 countries and regions since 2005, including 14 European countries such as Germany and France. None of the products have failed to meet quality standards.

Zhou Hongjiang, general manager of Changyu, attributed the achievements to the company's strict quality test system.

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GENERAL MANAGER OF CHANGYU

wine producing countries," he said.

Using criteria for organic grapes in China and Europe's quality standards for wine, Changyu created a comprehensive quality test system in 2000. It includes tests on grapes, auxiliary materials, wine processing and the final product.

To ensure the tests are effective, Changyu has spent more than 10 million yuan on state-of-the-art equipment such as liquid chromatographers and automatic analyzers.

Changyu's product quality was praised by Laurenz Moser, managing director of TxB International Fine Wines, the Changyu's biggest distributor in Europe.

Moser said since their cooperation began in 2005, Changyu has been doing a good job on quality control.

Even so, Moser visits Changyu every year and one of his tasks is to appraise the quality of the wine.

Last September, Moser and clients from the UK, Germany and Belgium did their own checks on Changyu's vineyards in Yantai, Ningxia, Xinjiang and Shannxi as well as its production sites and labs.



The Tinlot Wine Chateau plans to produce 250,000 bottles annually for up-market consumers.

Changyu chateau named for master vintner Robert Tinlot

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Changyu Pioneer Wine Co, China's oldest and largest winemaker, began construction on a new chateau on Sept 8 named for 80-year-old Robert Tinlot, the honorary president of the International Vine and Wine Office and the French Grape and Wine Institute.

Products from the chateau in Yantai, Shandong province, will target the upper-end of the wine market in China and overseas, the company said.

Requiring an investment of 150 million yuan (\$23.76 million), the Tinlot Wine Chateau is just a part of Changyu's ambitious plans to establish a 413-hectare international "wine city" on the outskirts of Yantai.

The 6 billion yuan wine city is designed to be one of the world's leading grape and wine production sites, playing an important role in the company's bid for a greater share of the global premium wine market.

It will be home to a national grape and wine research institute, grape cultivation areas, wine processing, an international wine trading center and

two luxurious chateaus.

According to Zhou Hongjiang, general manager of Changyu, the Tinlot wine chateau alone will have a 66.7-hectare vineyard of fine grapes for premium vintages. It is also the first organic vineyard in China.

To ensure quality, all vines are at least 10 years old and are only allowed to produce a limited quantity of grapes, just enough for 250,000 bottles of fine wine annually.

"With premium grapes and advanced production lines, the chateau can produce wines rivaling the world's best vintages. These wines will feature decent value for collectors and so a good choice for investors," said Zhou.

To express his affection for the namesake chateau, master winemaker Tinlot traveled to Yantai from France to attend the groundbreaking ceremony.

He also accepted the invitation to be the lifelong honorable president of the chateau.

"I will try my best to promote the development of the chateau and make its wines with unique Chinese flavor available to customers as soon as possible," Tinlot said at the ceremony.

Tinlot's connection to the city of Yantai and Changyu can be traced back 25 years. In 1987, he officially announced the 116 "International Vine and Wine Cities" from 28 countries and regions, with Yantai the only one listed in Asia. Five years later, he came to Yantai and granted the award to the city personally.

On a latitude similar to France's premier wine producing area Bordeaux, Yantai is regarded as China's best growing region for quality grapes, with abundant sunshine, favorable soil and the right humidity, he added.

Tinlot said that the city's favorable natural and business environment have fueled robust growth at a large number of local wineries in recent years.

"Among them, Changyu is the most impressive. I have seen it grow into one of the world's top wine producers in the past few years," he said.

To express gratitude to Tinlot for his contribution to promoting Chinese wine, Changyu awarded him the title of permanent resident of its international wine city. The company will also erect a statue of the wine master at the Tinlot Chateau.



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Changyu Jiebaina on sale at a Waitrose outlet in the UK.