

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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**Date:** 6/26/2013

**GAIN Report Number:** 2013.06.26

## China - Peoples Republic of

**Post:** Guangzhou

### South China wine lovers greet the summer with Zinfest Guangzhou 2013

**Report Categories:**

Wine

Agricultural Trade Office Activities

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**Report Highlights:**

On June 15, 2013, through ATO Guangzhou's advocating and facilitating efforts, the Marriott China Hotel organized a consumer promotional event featuring U.S. Zinfandel as the quintessential American wine varietal. Seven wine importers showcased and served over 24 zinfandel wines from California to over 100 guests. The world-class Master of Wine Ms. Debra Meiburg delivered a seminar on U.S. wines and the Zinfandel varietal. U.S. Consul General Jennifer Galt kicked off the event and drew massive media attention.

**General Information:**

In partnership with the U.S. Consulate General Guangzhou and the American Wine Import Association, China Hotel a Marriott Hotel, Guangzhou's premier venue for the promotion and sale of fine wines recreated the first-ever Zinfest (Zinfandel Wine Festival)-- a California tradition adapted to South China's local characteristics. Through this event, ATO Director Jorge Sanchez conveyed U.S. wines' selling points to South China consumers, wine professionals, and media:

- When did enjoying wine become so complicated? If the customer is always right, then it should not take much for them to figure out what they like. As Ernest Hemmingway said, "drinking wine was not a snobbism nor a sign of sophistication nor a cult; it was as natural as eating and to me as necessary."
- We believe fine wine should be accessible to everyone and drinking fine wine does not have to be in a formal setting. As uninhibited as the American spirit, Zinfandel wines have captured the attention of wine drinkers from all around the world and has forced the industry and consumers to rethink standards for wine appreciation.
- Zinfandel wines have delighted many new and experienced wine aficionados with their robust flavors, fragrant hints of strawberry and cherry and long lasting finish. The Zinfandel wine varietal is native to California, and its enduring flavor, is why many chefs have named it the "barbeque-wine". While some consumers indulge in other wine varietals with subtle tastes, most of us can enjoy the unabashed fruit forward blast in every sip of U.S. Zinfandel wine. There is a special Zinfandel wine for everyone's tastes and that can be paired with any dish.
- Zinfest 2013 is a festival of cultural exchange, friendship and hospitality. In the eternal words of Mark Twain "there are no standards of taste in wine, cigars, poetry, prose, etc. Each man's own taste is the standard, and a majority vote cannot decide for him or in any slightest degree affect the supremacy of his own standard."

**Media** responded positively. For example, one of China's largest internet media - the Sina.com reported about the event and posted many photos. The professional and known "WINE" magazine has also pledged to report about this event as part of its cover story. These media coverage will not only bring more U.S. wine know-how to local customers, but also helps improve the U.S. wine brand image and sales in the China market.

<http://eat.gd.sina.com.cn/news/2013-06-18/53884.html>

**Competition:** As Beijing launches anti-dumping investigation into European wine exports to China, U.S. wines have a valuable time window to increase market share while local consumers would now pay greater attention to wines outside the "old world".

China is an important battleground for U.S. wines and a major market for imported wines. In 2012, U.S. wine exports to China reached \$71 million, a 24 percent increase from that of 2011. However, due to the lack of product awareness among importers, distributors and consumers, the U.S. wine market share is only **four percent**, far behind other competitors such as France (50 percent) and Australia (14 percent). This situation is even worse in South China since USDA cooperators tend to allocate most resources to Shanghai and Beijing regardless of the fact that South China accounts for **60 percent** of China's total American wine imports (including imports through unofficial channels).

**Conclusion:** As the capital of Guangdong, Guangzhou is an important trade hub for imported wine and has great potential for U.S. wines particularly Zinfandel. And there is a saying that the name of "Lodi" is somewhat

associated with the Cantonese dialect used by early immigrants from Guangdong. Therefore, a special linkage could be established between Lodi and Guangzhou, which is one of the four first-tier and most affluent cities in China. The Zinfandel promotion could be the start of a string of fruitful bilateral activities between the City of Lodi and Guangzhou in the future.

**Next steps:**

1. The momentum needs to be kept to reinforce the promotion's impact in the market. ATO Guangzhou will discuss with U.S. wine importers and China Hotel Marriott about carrying out a two-week long "U.S. Zinfandel Food Pairing" menu promotion. For example, chilled white Zinfandel with salad and fish as well as deeper Old Wine Zinfandel with local Cantonese barbecue pork (char siu).
2. Introducing pink Zinfandel for wedding ceremonies. There is a new consumer trend that at wedding banquet ceremonies, hotels would serve guests wine. China Hotel and other five-star hotels are popular venues for wedding banquet ceremonies in South China. Many pink Zinfandel wines are relatively inexpensive and have "romantic" characteristics; therefore, these might be suitable to serve at these events.
3. U.S. Zinfandel related associations such as Lodi Chamber of Commerce should become involved in continuing market educational and promotional efforts. The goal is to make Chinese consumers know about the "Zinfandel" varietal and establish a positive brand image for it. This could be the gateway wine for many new consumers who have been turned away from the tart and tannin-heavy tastes of Burgundian varietals from France and Australia.

**Below pictures are posted on Sina.com:**



U.S. Consul General Jenifer Galt delivers opening remarks.



U.S. Consul General Jenifer Galt (left) and ATO Guangzhou Director Jorge Sanchez at the Zinfandel Wine Master Class.



Master of Wine Debra Meiburg talks about Zinfandel wines.



VIP guests with China Hotel managers.



California Zinfandel wines were prominently featured to local consumers. This booth was Delicato's in-country representative Summergate Fine Wines who was one of ten local wine distributors that participated in Guangzhou Zinfest 2013.