Consumer Countries/Markets

UK: On-trade alcohol sales continue to fall due rising prices

The Wine and Spirit Trade Association (WSTA) reported today that Brexit’s impact on the pound, rising inflation and the 3.9% inflationary duty rise on alcohol imposed by the Chancellor during the Budget in March are all factors to the price increase. Sales of wine in pubs, bars and restaurants show the average price of a 175ml glass of wine has increased 21p compared the same period last year.

This year, the average retail price of a bottle of wine hit an all-time high at £5.56. It currently sits at £5.58 – 4% higher than the same period last year. Over half (56%) of the cost of the average bottle of wine is taken up in tax, including £2.16 tax and 92p VAT. Duty rates are even higher on products like English sparkling wine at £2.77 a bottle.

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China wine market update: Cheaper wines taking over

Thanks to consumption by young people -- including teenagers -- China's wine market is bouncing back from the 2013 government crackdown on conspicuous consumption by bureaucrats. It has also changed immensely in a short time, mainly because of who is buying wine now: 45% of Chinese wine drinkers are under 30 years old. Sales of expensive wines continue to slide, while unlike in the U.S., the greatest sales growth is in the cheapest price ranges.

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Technology

Robotic Farmers Can Literally Reap What They Sow
If you want to grow a field full of barley but don’t want to get your hands dirty, never fear: robots can do the whole dang thing. That’s what researchers from Harper Adams University in the U.K. have shown. In a sleepy hectare of land in Shropshire, England, robots have been tending the land without a human setting foot on the field. A series of roboticized tractors and harvesters, along with drones for aerial surveillance, have carefully planted seeds, taken soil and crop samples, sprayed herbicides and fertilizers, and even harvested the resulting crop of barley. See them in action.

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