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Consumer Countries/Markets

- Starbucks selling NZ wine on North American night menu

North American Starbucks customers can now order a glass of New Zealand sauvignon blanc to go with their mocha frappuccinos.

The global coffee chain started selling alcohol five years ago when it introduced an evening menu in Seattle, which features a selection of wine and craft beer alongside coffee and tea and savory small plates.

"Starbucks Evenings" as it is called has been rolled out to hundreds of cafes across North America and features Marlborough sauvignon blanc from New Zealand’s Villa Maria and Kim Crawford wineries.

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Major Wine Producing Countries

- South Africa Industry update: Weak rand – more pain than gain

The rand, trading at around R15 to the US Dollar at the beginning of this month, has shown a steady decline since 2012 and reached an all-time low of R17.99 early in January.

At the same time, the export market for South African wine – a mainstay of the post sanctions era since the 1990s – has decreased by 20% and 1% in volume respectively in the past two calendar years (bulk and packaged). In the 12 months period until end February, packaged exports dropped by 4%, but the domestic market grew 8% until end January and continued its sudden upswing of the past two years.

This year will be a watershed for the South African wine industry and actually something’s got to give because of severe economic pressures – which are by far not outweighed by the exchange rate benefits of the weak rand.

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• The battle for Spanish terroir

As a determined band of Spain’s top terroir-focused winemakers continues to win support for its cause, the country’s consejos face a choice: do they resist, or do they adapt?

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Natural / Physical Resources

• ‘Godzilla’ El Niño is dead

The warmest ocean temperature anomalies on record blossomed in its core, the largest area of exceptionally warm water ever seen in the tropical Pacific.

Over the past few weeks, the equatorial Pacific has been cooling. The extreme tropical temperatures that broke records earlier this winter have waned, and El Niño, though still present, is a shadow of its former Godzilla self. It signals a possible shift to the Pacific’s other phase, La Niña.

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