Consumer Countries/Markets

China: Chateau of A Hundred Prices

If you think wine shopping in the West is confusing, try choosing a bottle from the aisles of a supermarket in Chengdu.

Shopping for wine in China is never a task for the fainthearted. Wine with distinctive label that can give hint on the price, the taste and origin of a wine can be very helpful to identify on the shelf and memory.

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Global Trends - Wine Industry Key Elements

Demographics: Act your age!

While focusing on Millennials, we have forgotten about the power of older generations.

According to the UK’s Daily Telegraph, over 50s are the biggest consumer market in terms of spending in the UK. In fact, 80% of the UK’s wealth is held by the over 50s, thanks largely to their vice-like hold on the property market, with the number of over 55s expected to grow to 1/3 of the population by 2018 (The Telegraph).

Only 39% of those aged 55 and upwards are planning on moving house – many are already in a comfortable position and able to spend money on more interesting things. Baby-boomers aren’t doing too badly on the healthy eating and exercise front either – one in eight finishers at the London marathon this year was over 50 (The Telegraph).

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Natural / Physical Resources
French vintners feel heat as leaders seek carbon consensus

France’s wine industry faces a major shake-up over the next three and a half decades as the impacts of a warming atmosphere force changes to traditions that have lasted generations.

By Sid Maher

Already the grape harvest, which was once in late September, is routinely brought forward.

In Bordeaux, the harvest has gone from the end of September to the end of August at times as farmers battle increasing levels of alcohol in the grapes caused by heat. Champagne grapes are regularly being harvested two weeks earlier compared to 20 years ago.

French climate researchers say the changes will continue. Under current projections, Paris will end up with an equivalent climate to Madrid, within about four decades, according to Serge Planton, the head of the climate research group at the National Meteorological Research Centre.

The best region to grow Champagne grapes will move from France to near London.

French winemakers may need to examine North African grape varieties to cope with the hotter climate.

On the ground in Paris, climate change is not making sweeping headlines, but changes are afoot.

There, 78,000 people have signed up to an electric car-sharing scheme run by the city.

For €10 ($14.50) a month, drivers can book electric cars for about €5 a trip and have a guaranteed park at a charging station.

With Paris due to host the COP21 climate summit from the end of November, minds in science and politics are turning to the consequences of climate change and how to strike a significant deal at the conference.

The French are mindful that the perceived failure of the 2009 Copenhagen conference set back action to combat climate change.

They are avoiding pumping up expectations, instead painting success as getting an agreement from the 195 nations to cut emissions.

But they are leaving open the possibility that the pledges will fall short of the levels necessary to limit global warming to 2C.

"In the real world, we won’t be able to solve everything next December,” a senior source close to French President Francois Hollande told The Weekend Australian.

"It’s not life and death,“ the source said, arguing that what was needed was a road map for the next five years to get close to the cuts necessary to limit global warming to 2C.

Some French officials fear that a perception of failure at the conference could see the emissions - reduction effort stall for another decade.

Mr Planton, who has worked on several Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, says the science indicates the world doesn’t have time for that sort of delay.

He says there is a clear signal that the planet is warming. Sea levels have been rising 3.2mm a year since 1993. There are doubts the oceans, which have been absorbing 93 per cent of the excess energy in the atmosphere for the past three or four decades, can continue to act as carbon sinks at higher temperatures.

Even a rise of 2C could prove too much for the coral on the Great Barrier Reef.
However, the agreement on emissions reductions struck by the US and China is giving officials reasons for optimism.

US President Barack Obama is driving action against climate change as a “legacy issue” as he nears the end of his presidency.

The Chinese government, which played a spoiling role at Copenhagen, is driving emissions reductions from a more practical level — pollution in major Chinese cities is driving civil unrest and has become a major political problem for the Communist Party.

With G7 leaders this week deciding to move away from the use of fossil fuels by the end of the century, part of the strategy will be to build consensus through leaders’ meetings.

Climate change is set to be on the agenda at the G20 meeting in Turkey and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is likely to again call leaders together on the issue during the UN General Assembly in New York in September.

Leaders will be invited to another meeting either in the days before the conference or at the start of the conference.

Tony Abbott, after resisting putting climate change on the agenda at the G20 meeting, is seen as resisting “ambitious action” to cut emissions but the Prime Minister will be invited to the pre-conference leaders’ meeting and French officials say they are confident Australia will make a “positive” contribution to the conference.

A senior Australian government figure said Australia had always said “we will make a strong and ambitious statement in mid-July that is widely understood and appreciated”.

Pascal Canfin, a former French Green politician and now a senior adviser to the World Resources Institute’s climate program, says renewable electricity production is now challenging coal in terms of generation costs.

However, a replacement for oil as a transport fuel is still 10 years away.

Pending a breakthrough in storage technology, the time has come for coal to be replaced by gas for baseload generation with the rest of electricity demand supplied by renewables, he says.

He says the Paris conference should underline the economic case for a transition away from coal to renewables and that the greatest case for embracing renewables and with it emissions reductions is the economic opportunities that will create.

He says the renewables train is pulling away from the station and that backing fossil fuels, in particular coal, is the equivalent of being “stuck on the platform”.

This article was originally published in The Australian. The author visited France as a guest of the Hollande government.

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**Technology**

**Powdered alcohol faces U.S. prohibition calls in consumer poll**

A national poll by has found over half of U.S. consumers favor a ban on powdered alcohol on concerns it promotes underage drinking, but the manufacturers say it’s safer than liquid alcohol.

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