



Numbers look good for Canada

Victorian based wine company Ainsworth & Snelson is currently selling wine in Australia, the UK and France, with Canadian exports about to begin and distribution in Ireland, Denmark and Singapore to follow.

Gregg Ainsworth and Brett Snelson founded the company in 2001 in order to make handcrafted wines of true regional expression. The range so far consists of Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon, Barossa Valley Shiraz and Yarra Valley Chardonnay, which will all be sold in Canada.

Gregg said Canada was quickly identified as a potential market. "When we sat down to decide where to focus our export efforts, even the most cursory analysis throws Canada into the mix, it now being the third most valuable export market for Australian wine behind the UK and US," he said.



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“However, beyond that, as a premium wine producer it’s important to observe that Canada is second globally to only Singapore in terms of average value per litre exported. Canadian consumers appreciate, and will pay for quality wine. And growth rates have been among the highest in the world. A beautiful set of numbers!”

Gregg and Brett conducted market research and also relied on the advice of a company director, a Canadian citizen who is, not surprisingly, familiar with the practicalities of navigating the state-administered system. Gregg said this could seem like a minefield to the uninitiated.

“Having an agent to represent you to the LCBO is vital, as is appreciating that requirements relating to mandatories and chemical analysis are potentially onerous and exacting,” he said.

The wines of Ainsworth & Senlson are, to some, reminiscent of a bygone era, while to others they represent a new generation of low-intervention wines, which celebrate fruit and region.

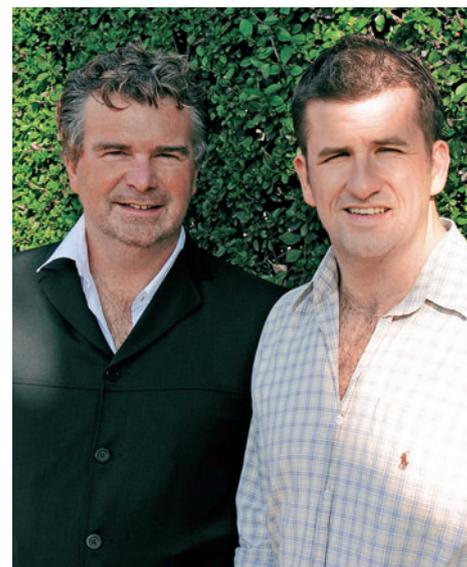
“Either way we like to see them as a refreshing counterpoint to the trend of increasingly brutal wine styles which are becoming regarded as the definitive ‘Australian style,’” Gregg said.

He said it was also vital for high-end Australian winemakers to provide leadership in export markets.

“While we are pleased by the market share and volume success achieved by brands such as [yellow tail], we think it comes at a price. It’s critical for Australian wine to avoid being seen merely as an entry-level wine destination and we believe that celebrating the glorious regional diversity of Australia is a key plank in this strategy,” Gregg said.

“Thankfully we are not alone. We have been overwhelmed by trade, consumer and critical response for our first vintage and the overall concept.”

Gregg and Brett will tackle the US market eventually, but are prepared to be patient until the right opportunities are identified. “In reality the US is a collection



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of many diverse markets. It is very much about finding like-minded distribution partners, on a state-by state basis, who understand the selling of quality versus quantity,” Gregg said.

Hyatt National Riesling Challenge 19 – 22 October 2005

Nominations sought for

Wolf Blass Award

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The winner will be invited to attend the Hyatt National Riesling Challenge Awards Dinner on Friday 21st October, 2005, staying overnight at the Hyatt Hotel Canberra as guests of the Wolf Blass Foundation Inc.

Nominations close on 27 September 2005 and are to be on an official nomination form available from the Hyatt National Riesling Challenge office.

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