

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Washington State Wines Making Inroads in Mexico

Report Categories:

Export Accomplishments - Events

Wine

HRI Food Service Sector

Retail Food Sector

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Report Highlights:

ATO Mexico City collaborated with the Washington State Wine Commission (WSWC) to promote several new wines during a seminar and tasting called, "Washington State Wines 101", held on January 20, 2011. Members from the Mexican Association of Sommeliers conducted the tasting and highlighted the quality and value of Washington wines showcased at the event. Important wine importers, distributors, sommeliers and chefs from renowned Mexican restaurants attended the event along with a dozen press representatives that provided excellent coverage in local media outlets. This event was funded through a Washington State USDA Specialty Crop Block grant to host trade tastings, educational seminars and a "Washington Wine Month" campaign in Mexico.

General Information:

The Mexico City Agricultural Trade Office (ATO), the Washington State Wine Commission (WSWC) and the Mexican Association of Sommeliers jointly collaborated on a seminar and wine tasting called, “Washington State Wines 101”, held on January 20, 2011. Members from the Mexican Association of Sommeliers conducted the tasting which targeted wine importers, distributors, sommeliers and chefs from renowned Mexican restaurants as well as press representatives that provided excellent coverage in local media outlets. This event was funded through a Washington State USDA Specialty Crop Block grant to host trade tastings, educational seminars and a “Washington Wine Month” campaign in Mexico. This was one of the various efforts the WSWC is doing to promote their wines in the growing Mexican wine market.

The event was highly attended and helped increase awareness among top wine importers and distributors in Mexico City. It was a good approach to develop awareness of Washington wines by educating importers and buyers about the quality and diversity of Washington wines, which is expected to increase demand in this market. This event also helped create liaisons between Washington wineries and the Mexican importers which will expand the current supply of Washington wines in Mexico.

The wines featured at the promotion event included:

- Columbia Crest Two Vines Riesling
- Columbia Crest Two Vines Merlot
- L’Ecole No. 41
- Chateau Ste Michelle Cabernet Sauvignon

Wineries represented at the event included:

- Columbia Crest
- Pacific Rim
- L’ecole 41
- Two Mountain
- Long Shadows

The state of Washington is a premium wine-producing region located in the northwest corner of the United States, and it is now the nation's second largest wine producer and is ranked among the world's top wine regions. Washington produces more than 30 wine grape varieties with Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot, Chardonnay, and Riesling being its leading varieties. Washington wines have been praised by critics around the world for their consistently high quality much of which is credited to the state's climate and ideal soils for vineyards.

Mexican Wine Market is Booming

Until recent years, Mexico was considered primarily a producer and consumer of beer and tequila. However, with Mexico's transition towards greater wine consumption, the industry has met higher demand for quality wines than local wineries can supply. In general, Mexican wines are perceived as overpriced (considering the quality) in comparison with other similar quality wines found in the market from Chile, Argentina and Spain. Currently 70% of the wine consumed in Mexico is imported from foreign countries. Nationwide

wine consumption has increased in the last few years but is still very low in comparison with that of other countries like Spain, Italy, and France. However, market analysts estimate an annual 12% growth rate in wine consumption over the next few years. Mexico's transition to more wine consumption over other alcoholic beverages, increased interest among different consumer sectors including women and young adults, and growing interest among consumers in trying novel wines makes Mexico an excellent market for the promotion and sales of U.S. wines.

The substantial growth in the Mexican wine industry has been reached for several reasons. Much is attributed to the initiative by key players in the industry to boost the wine culture throughout the nation. In addition, worldwide synergy among wine producers, distributors, and consumers of Mexican wines has driven the wine market in Mexico on an upward spike. Fortunately, for the Mexican consumer, domestic supply has increased as a result of steady marketing campaigns and a variety of distribution channels. Currently, 70% of the market is made up of wines from other countries with the remaining 30% coming from Mexican production. The wine industry in Mexico is still dominated by Chilean, Spanish, and French wines. Chilean wine dominance in the Mexican wine market is attributed to the vast availability of many high-quality, yet reasonable priced wines. Despite the popularity of these wines in the Mexican market, wine consumers in several states in Mexico are extremely open to trying wines from various countries including the United States.

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FAS/Mexico Web Site: We are available at www.mexico-usda.com or visit the FAS headquarters' home page at www.fas.usda.gov for a complete selection of FAS worldwide agricultural reporting.

FAS/Mexico YouTube Channel: Catch the latest videos of FAS Mexico at work
<http://www.youtube.com/user/ATOMexicoCity>

Useful Mexican Web Sites: Mexico's equivalent to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (SAGARPA) can be found at www.sagarpa.gob.mx and Mexico's equivalent to the U.S. Department of Commerce (SE) can be found at www.economia.gob.mx. These web sites are mentioned for the readers'

convenience but USDA does NOT in any way endorse, guarantee the accuracy of, or necessarily concur with, the information contained on the mentioned sites.