

The other Vinexpo - a 'buzzing

29 May 2008 by JR

You may wonder why there have been so few releases of the 2007 Bordeaux this week (only Eximig, a cool EB&S a dozen at J&R) - or if you operate in or around the wine trade, you may wonder why things have been so quiet. The answer lies in the Far East. Practically everyone who is anyone in Bordeaux has been in Hong Kong at the 8th Vinexpo Asia-Pacific which has just finished.

It was officially opened on Tuesday by the wine commissioner Henry Tang Ying-yen, CBE, JP, Chief Secretary for Administration, HKSAR, who kindly provided me with my second best ever bottle of Chateau Blanc 1947 - none of the best yet to come and Anne Marie Vidal, French Secretary for Foreign Trade. Asia is seen as so important to the French the wine business that the French government is shelling out its officials too! The pair were accompanied by Frederick Ma Si-hang, JP, Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, HKSAR and Dominique Huetzel, the chair of the exhibition, which really kept the money flowing in to its Bordeaux-based organisers in the years when there is no Vinexpo in Bordeaux.

The organisers claim that the year's expo broke all records with 8,500 visitors representing an increase of almost 24% in visitor numbers over the last one in 2006. An estimated 55% of visitors were foreign, from 28 Asian countries led by China and followed by Korea, Taiwan, Japan and Singapore plus a small percentage from such overseas markets as USA and UK. An estimated 41% of visitors were from Hong Kong and Macao.

This does no harm to the Hong Kong government's intention to establish Hong Kong as the hub of the Asian fine wine market, although there will be a big competition for numbers from Hong Kong's own international wine show planned, at rather short notice after the start of wine import duty in HK, for August 2008 as reported [here](#).

The Bordeaux-owned exhibition was apparently covered by more than 340 television, radio, newspaper and magazine journalists from all over Asia as well as journalists from Europe and the United States.

Vinexpo 2008 occupied the entire main hall of Hong Kong's Exhibition Centre with 602 exhibitors from 32 countries including China, Australia, US, South America, UK, France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Korea, New Zealand, Netherlands, Romania, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Macedonia and Moldova. (Sounds just as wide a spread as the London International Wine Trade Fair last week...)

Mine Huetzel Dubouff's closing remarks were only very slightly condescending: "The general consensus amongst our exhibitors this year showed that they were extremely impressed with the quality of the professional contacts they have made, as well as the noticeable improvement in their knowledge and appreciation of wine and spirits. We firmly believe that this will help stimulate growth of the industry in the region and ultimately benefit the consumer." Not forgetting the French wine trade, of course.

On Saturday, Adler Merrill & Corbett host the first American-run fine wine auction in Hong Kong and I hear that Adler's human dynamo John Rapson has been estimating potential bidders with a breathless uncommon even in HK for almost two weeks.