



# Perennial poser: how to sway China's 'red' army?

## WINE

IT is a truth, universally acknowledged, that the affluent Chinese, in possession of disposable income, must be in want of a wine.

At least, that's the plot line Australian-listed wine producer and exporter Dawine is banking on — and it's stress-testing its online ordering platform to cater for the expected Sino rush.

According to research house Wine Intelligence, China now has 48 million upper-middle class people who drink imported wines, up from just 19 million in 2010.

The figure is expected to grow to 160 million in another 10 years.

And with the Asian powerhouse now the biggest export market for Australian wines — exports to mainland China surged 51 per cent to \$474 million last year — Dawine is aiming to be the portal of choice when fresh shipments are ordered.

But as infant formula producer Bellamy's Australia has discovered, identifying China as the next big thing and turning a buck from it are separate matters.

Given China's love for all things red — the colour symbolises good fortune — it is no surprise that 93 per cent of all wines consumed there are red, too.

But unlike in the Western world, there's a whole range of varieties to which the Chinese have had limited or no exposure, Dawine executive chairman Piers Lewis says.

"Their palate is really refined, they can pick teas from all over the world. They're just not as experienced in wine," Mr Lewis said.

"The same thing happened in Australia; we all drank claret in the '80s but we moved on."

Dawine is hoping to change all that, with wines from top Victorian grape growing regions such as the Grampians, Yarra Valley and Mornington Peninsula on its wanted list.

Its point of difference is it won't offer an exhaustive range, which it hopes will make it stand out from the pack.

"The Mornington Peninsula has 20 different pinots, so which one is best? If you're in China sitting at your laptop, how would you know?" Mr Lewis said.

"We make the selection for you. We produce a video on each wine, the reasons for our selection, and we talk to the winemakers."

The Perth-based minnow, which relisted on the Australian Securities Exchange late last month through a reverse takeover, last week announced it had finished a process to test the capacity of its online ordering platform.

The platform can now handle up to 3.5 million interactions every hour, or about 10,000 visitors at once.

The platform is also available on a smartphone app and allows customers to track their order.

Shares in Dawine closed up 8 per cent yesterday at 2.7c, valuing the company at \$15.8 million.

PAUL GILDER



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**WHAT DAWINE SELLS**

- Cabernet tempranillo, Fox Gordon, SA
- Shiraz, Atkins Farm, SA
- Cabernet sauvignon, Edwards, WA
- Shiraz, Lost Lake, WA

**REGIONS ON ITS WISHLIST**

- The Grampians, Vic - shiraz, riesling
- Mornington Peninsula, Vic - pinot noir
- Yarra Valley, Vic - chardonnay, pinot noir
- Hunter Valley, NSW - chardonnay, shiraz
- Margaret River, WA - shiraz, merlot
- Marlborough, NZ - sauvignon blanc
- France - sparkling
- Chile - merlot

Dawine executive chairman Piers Lewis (far right) and chief technology officer Davide Defendi hope to uncork the affluent Chinese market.

**DAWINE**