Wine from Western Australia at a glance

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A growing number of service providers including chemical companies and private consultants also provide technical support and other services. The Federal Government's winery industry, the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation has the responsibility for regulating and promoting the export of wine. All Australian wine destined for overseas markets is inspected by the Corporation to ensure that it meets the legal requirements of the importing country. The wine must also be the highest quality set by the Australian industry to maintain the reputation as a reliable producer of high quality, value for money wine at all price points.

The Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation maintain statistics on grape tonnages and wine production from the various regions in Australia and provide an information service (E-mail: info@wba.com.au; Website: www.wine.com.au).

AN EXPORT ORIENTATION

Western Australia has a large number of highly regarded brands, enjoyed the world over. The industry is well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities emerging in overseas markets as it offers high quality wines at competitive prices. Wine grapes planted in Western Australia are of premium varieties.

Growing for the Future

Coupled with the growth in wine production has been the development of wine vineyard. Wine is sold at very high prices in other activities and products in the south-east regions of Western Australia. Westerns to the State can now enjoy a unique combination of quality wine, fine cities and the scenic natural environments of the State's south-west.

Western Australia has much to offer as a wine producing region and a market supplier including:

- A range of climates and soil conditions ideal for producing premium wines with distinct, attractive regional characteristics
- A grape growing environment free of many of the most notorious grape pests and diseases.
- Vineyards dominated by premium wine grape varieties.
- State of the art processing facilities.
- Arabic in numerous, internationally renowned premium wine brands.
- A well established export infrastructure and expertise.
- All stages of the production process.
- A determination to further enhance the industry's premium quality reputation.
- A successful partnership between producers, industry bodies and government.

Further Information

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References

Steffe, R (2000) Western Australia's wine industry. Western Australian Journal of Agriculture and Forestry

The industry is excited at the prospect of continuing strong overseas demand for premium Western Australia wines. Over 70 per cent of production is sold at overseas markets. Sales overseas have been limited by the strong demand for Western Australian wines on the domestic market. Wine exports, however, are experiencing substantial growth and continuing to increase in value each year.

The wines are exported to most European countries, North America, New Zealand, South East Asia, Hong Kong and Japan. Western Australian wines are also exported to New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. The Western Australian wine industry also supports fine wine exhibitions staged in both domestic and overseas markets.

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Western Australia continues to enjoy a growing international reputation for the production of premium quality wines. According to international wine exhibitions and publications are abundant. National advantages such as the climate and soils, ideally suited to the production of premium quality wine grapes in a high-value environment make Western Australia an ideal place to supply quality wines to domestic and international markets.

Western Australia is a small but significant player in the national wine scene, particularly at the premium end of the market. It produces five per cent of Australia’s wine, but because of a strong commitment to the premium and ultra-premium wine market, Western Australia represents at least ten per cent of total sales. In contrast to the Eastern States, where large and diverse industry produces wine to meet the demands of the full range of market segments, the Western Australian industry is highly focused, producing virtually no cook or table wines.

**Growing Resource Base**

In the last five years the Western Australian wine industry enjoyed strong and unprecedented growth. The area devoted to wine grape cultivation has more than doubled in the past five years, with 12,000 hectares, producing an annual crush of 30,000 tonnes of wine with an estimated value of 250 million. This equates to an estimated retail value exceeding 750 million. Many of the newer plantings are reaching full production and in anticipation that production will steadily increase at a slower rate than experienced in the 2000 - 2005 period.

The industry is still dominated by small, and mostly family owned and operated businesses. Several are undergoing rapid expansion while others are aiming under the control of larger companies. If current trends continue corporate ownership will increase. The overall increase in activity will generate significantly greater production.

**Growing Environment**

Western Australia has vast areas of land with soils and climate suitable for the production of premium quality wine grapes and is far from many of the more serious wine pests and diseases. The state’s isolated status of the Mainland from Europe north of Perth down through the South-west and access to the Peronnesque area Mount Barker in the South.

The main Western Australian wine growing region have a Mediterranean type climate with minimal rainfall, spring fog and cool mild summer and very distinct wet/dry growing seasons. The pattern of late summer fog that produces the classic environment where grapes are grown (70% of total production) is a good example of Australian wine’s reputation for high quality grapes.

**Wine Health Benefits**

Wine can be taken ‘by the glass’ and can reduce cholesterol levels and lower blood pressure, has a protective effect against cardiovascular disease and may alter the risk factors of breast cancer by counteracting the effects of estrogen found in milk.

The industry has been growing faster than anywhere else in the world. A 30 per cent increase in Western Australian wine grape production from 1999 to 2004 is the largest percentage increase of any Australian state. The exceptionally high growth rate of wine production in WA is without precedent or precedence, indicative of a strong demand, which will benefit from the increased supply. WA is well placed to benefit from the international trend towards ‘drink less, but drink better’.

This trend mirrors the national industry where market driven expansion has seen Australian wine exports increase in value from 2.19 billion in 2000-01 to $2.34 billion in 2001-02. Australian wine exports have a key to the Western wine industry statement “the World’s most elegant and enduring supplier of branded wines, pioneering wine as a national first-class lifestyle offering” (Shakespeare’s Federation of Australia, 1990).

**Strong Industry Support**

Although only contributing five per cent of Australia’s production, the local wine industry has over 75 per cent of victories in Australia with over 350 processing facilities and so many registered wine businesses without minimuts.

A wide range of allied industries provide services to the regions including vineyard suppliers and contractors, trade people including packaging suppliers, statistical trade analysts, transport companies with national and international links, consultants, packaging companies and many others.

The industry is strongly committed to value adding, both to the raw material (grapes) by constructing state of the art wine making facilities, and to the final product (wine) through a strong alliance with the tourism industry. Investment in infrastructure ensures processing facilities keep pace with the growing production base. A number of large scale industries have recently been built. Contract wineries are established ahead of an anticipated rise in production.

**Partnerships for Growth**

The Western Australian Government and the peak body, the Wine Industry Association of Western Australia, work together to realise the vision of combining sustainable growth and improving competitiveness. The Association and state government agencies including the Department of Agriculture & Food Western Australia, the Western Australian Tourism Commission, and the Department of Industry & Resources are committed to ensuring that the industry maximises its potential over the coming decade.

**Research and Development**

A new venture known as Agricultural Research Waters Australia (MRA) aims to deliver a coordinated research, development and research training program founded on the long-term, strategic needs of the agricultural, food and fibre industries – with an emphasis on relevance, applicability and rapid adoption.