

Germans like SA wines, ja!

Nederburg gains as Germans grow a thirst for wines rather than beer.



Nederburg cellar master, Razvan Macici.

First, it was the English, a nation of tea and ale drinkers, who introduced wine to their repertoire to become the world's largest purchaser of wine. Now the Germans appear to be changing their drinking habits too, with South Africa's wine industry a definite beneficiary.

Statistics from Deutscher Weinbauverband, released by Wines of South Africa (WOSA), reflect robust growth for South African wines in Germany for the 12 months ending February 2008. South Africa has become the fourth-biggest supplier in value terms, ranked behind Italy, France and Spain, thanks to a 11,2% increase in its value share of the market.

Although quantities of South African wines exported to Germany were marginally below those of Chile for the period, the country was slightly ahead of Chile in value terms. Chile held a 4,3% share of volume and 3,1% of value, compared with South Africa's 4,1% of volume and 3,3% of value.

Meanwhile, Nederburg, an active player in the German wine market - Germany is, in fact, Nederburg's biggest market after South Africa - has reported a 6% year-on-year increase in sales volumes for the 12 months to April. Sparkling wine exports more than doubled.

Says David Cope, the estate's brand manager, "Ongoing news of our international successes on wine shows has certainly helped to boost the visibility and image of the brand, despite the ever-increasing competition. An award-winning reputation, coupled with excellent value across a range of price points, also affords Nederburg a competitive edge."

The growth in wine sales to Germany comes on the back of a recent report by leading UK drinks magazine *Harpers* quoting findings of the latest *Germany Food and Drink Report*, that beer sales were declining, in sharp contrast to a boom in wine sales.

Whereas last year beer sales fell to their lowest levels since 1993, the German wine industry has seen sales increase by 11,1% in the last five years, with value sales growth forecast to increase 11,3% by 2012, according to the *Harpers* report.

Joël Payne, editor of Germany's highly influential *Meininger's Wine Business International* who was in South Africa this month (May) to judge in the Old Mutual SA Trophy Wine Show, says the country has a clear advantage over other New World producers in Germany. Wine-trading ties extend over 60 years between the two, and South African wines, styled to combine Old World finesse and New World fruit, appealed to the German palate.

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