

Helan Mountain wines harvest international recognition

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Although it is the first visit to Yinchuan for Berthold Zurl, sales manager for German vine plantation machine maker Wagner, he is not unfamiliar with the land conditions in Northwest China.

His company has already sold machines to Europe, the Americas and even Africa, but he could not conceal his excitement when talking about the market in Yinchuan, in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region.

“People are talking about the big potential of the major project at the East Foot of Helan Mountain, which is expanding plantations to cover tens of hundreds of hectares in grapes. The market is so huge that we have to be here in person to present ourselves.”

He said the German machines would help plant vines accurately and at precise distances in neat rows, making for “easier and economical” vineyard management. “It will generate real demand,” he said.

Zurl is taking part in the International Trade Show for Wine Production and Fruit, Vegetable Farming (Sitevinitech) 2015 in Yinchuan. As well as representatives of other wine regions in China, such as Shandong and Xinjiang, more than 50 overseas suppliers and makers of equipment related to wine production from countries including France, Italy, Germany and Australia were attracted to the event.

“The convergence of the world’s leading equipment and technology in Ningxia means the East Foot of Helan Mountain region has made a step forward in production mech-

100
million
bottles of quality wine each year

34K
hectares
of wine grape growing area

anization, equipment modernization and development internationalization,” said Li Xueming, head of the Ningxia Grape Industry Development Bureau.

According to local authorities, the outstanding terroir and climate at the East Foot of Helan Mountain has seen its 96 wines reap more than 200 prizes in international and domestic competitions. Winemakers and wine organizations recognize the area as an emerging and prominent production zone in China and consumers view it as source of quality wine.

Already, it has 34,000 hectares of wine grape growing area, and is home to 72 established vineyards and chateaus with another 58 in the pipeline. It produces about 100 million bottles of quality wine each year.

The local government is leading the development plan to further expand the production area to about 66,000 hectares by 2020.

“We hope the exhibition will promote exchanges in winemaking equipment and technologies between China and other countries,” said Hao Linhai, director of the Management Committee of the Ningxia Helan Mountain East Foot Grape Industry Zone.

“It could also bring together production zones in China and overseas and facilitate cross-cultural discussion on terroir and climate. Wine is more than a simple drink.



The exhibition offers equipment related to wine production that focuses on details.

Understanding wines and wine culture is a process where you learn what’s in the wines. It is like understanding teas,” Hao said.

This is the second time for Ningxia to host Sitevinitech. In 2013, when the former ambassador of France to China, Sylvie Bermann, visited the East Foot of Helan Mountain, she was impressed and proposed holding Sitevinitech in Yinchuan the following year. This year, the exhibition also gained support from the International Organization of Vine and Wine.

Director general of the OIV, Jean-Marie Aurand, said in Yinchuan, “I’m convinced that the actions engaged to promote and enhance the East Foot of Helan Mountain wines in order to develop wine regulations, wine tourism and international partnerships could help give the Ningxia wine region a leader role in future Chinese representation in the OIV.”

Local wine producers said they benefited from the exhibition.

Shao Qingsong, owner of wine company Ningxia Lilan, said the exhibition would improve winemaking quality in the region because of the availability of equipment suitable for the lean management and operation of chateaus. “The exhibition offers equipment that focuses on details and optimizes the processes before and after the fermenting stage,” Shao said.

Wang Fang, owner of Ningxia Kanaan Winery, said Yinchuan is an ideal place to hold the event as, in the past, wineries there had to spend much time and energy to find suppliers outside Ningxia for bottles, corks and packaging. “Now we have convenience and more choices. The show also broadens our views — I learned much from it.”