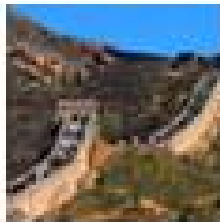




Climate change set to dramatically hit wine industry

A new report claims that climate change is set to have a massive impact on the global wine industry, with China set to become the world's biggest producer by 2050.



The report from wine storage company Spiral Cellars predicts that Sweden, Denmark, Patagonia and even England will become serious players in the winemaking industry due to the impact of climate change. China, meanwhile, will see its number of vineyards multiply tenfold from its 400 existing wineries to 4,000.

According to vineyard consultant Dr Richard Smart, climate change is "the biggest factor ever to affect the wine industry".

Smart says the impact it has can already be seen in the Australian wine industry, where it is estimated more than a quarter of the country's 8,000 grape growers could be forced off their farms in the next two years due to rising temperatures.

The report discusses how average growing season temperatures in the world's 27 leading wine regions have gone up by 1.3 degrees Celsius over the past 50 years, and are predicted to rise by a further two degrees by 2050.

This figure could be even bigger in some of the biggest wine producing regions, such as parts of Australia, southern France, South Africa, Chile and California.

On the other hand, climate change could put new contenders on the map – countries such as Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Ukraine and Patagonia, not to mention England, which are currently regarded as minor players at best in the world of wine.

It will also force existing wine regions to move their vineyards to cooler sites, or to try out different grape varieties, as they seek to minimise the impact of warmer temperatures, according to Smart.

The report also look at what we can expect to be the 10 regions to watch over the next 40 years, exploring the potential of sparkling wines from the Camel Valley, reds from New Zealand's Hawke's Bay or even Pinots and Chardonnays from Tasmania.

Closer to home, the report tells how wine consumption and collecting in the UK has increased dramatically, with the average UK adult now buying 12% more wine than they did five years ago and also buying better quality wines.

The Spiral Cellars guide to Wines of the Future can be downloaded from www.spiralcellars.co.uk