



Casella appointment to drive wine sales in Asia



AUSTRALIAN wine company Casella Wines has appointed Matthew Davidson Asia Pacific export sales manager for its [yellow tail] brand in order to capitalise on the growing interest in wine in many Asian markets.

Davidson previously held the role of regional sales manager at the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa for Constellation Wines International in South Australia, where he gained valuable global credentials and sales skills relevant to the various Asian cultures. He has also worked for Samuel Smith & Sons Fine Wine Merchants in Melbourne and for Dr Frank's Vinifera Wine Cellars in the US.

Angus McPherson, Casella's export sales manager, said: "The Asian market currently presents a significant opportunity for Australian wine brands like [yellow tail] and Matt has the experience and dedication to help grow our business."

The [yellow tail] brand is already well established in Asia and has experienced strong growth over the past few years, particularly in Japan and China. Casella's newly launched Moscato, which has a sweeter flavour profile and contains less alcohol, has also been well received in this market, according to Davidson.

"Despite many challenges and often high barriers to entry, Casella is definitely looking at these regions for growth opportunities as the wine markets develop further," Davidson told *F&DB*. "The emergence of China as Australia's fastest growing export market provides some very good opportunities for Casella and the [yellow tail] brand. China is a very in-

teresting market with many challenges and hurdles. A middle class is emerging with disposable income, a thirst for knowledge and an interest in Western tastes and customers. With such a powerful, visible brand, there is definite potential for success."

Separately, Casella has re-launched its [yellow tail] Bubbles and Bubbles Rosé, with a product reformulation, resealable cork and redesigned packaging.

Average monthly sales of sparkling wine in Australia grew by 71 per cent from November 2009 to January 2010, according to market analyst Nielsen.

The flavour profile of both drinks has been tweaked and the alcohol content has been reduced from 12 per cent to 11.5 per cent. The resealable cork, supplied by contemporary beverage closure company Zork, can be removed, then reset by pressing a button and resused.

The rebrand was a collaborative effort between Casella and US-based Future Brand, which carried out research in America to gauge consumer interest in the new packaging. A spokesperson for Casella said: "The new package was extremely well received, with more than 60 per cent of US sparkling consumers willing to purchase the new [yellow tail] Bubbles."

For the packaging, the brand essence and recognisable visual cues, such as the wallaby image and brand name in square brackets, remain unchanged, but metallic gold and pink have been introduced.

