

The Festival took place in Moscow on 29 April 2010. By all means and measures it was a resounding success! We are now hoping that combined with the other programs and activities of WOSA in Russia it will result in increased interest to and growing sales of South African wines!

The vibe is definitely changing in Russia. This time a year ago the mood of the importers and distributors was bleak and uncertain. Today, optimism and readiness for action are prevailing on the market. The numerous talks with the importers and distributors at the Festival and their interest to the new wines in their portfolios have confirmed that there is a definite positive shift. There is unfortunately no statistics released for the first quarter of this year yet, and I am hoping to get it by my next report.

From the start of the preparation to the Festival the interest of importers and distributors was obvious. It did not take long to sign up the majority of prominent players on the market to take part. Just a few importers with feasible South African wine portfolios decided to watch first how the event goes this time and postponed their decision till the next year.

Ultimately, 11 distributors – most of them are among the biggest in country – took part in the show: Alianta, Aroma, DP Trade, Eastern Wine and Spirits, Fort Ltd, Marine Express, Rusimport, Trinity Group, Vagr Vina Vita, ViWine and Whitehall. The distributors presented the following wines of their South African portfolios: **Arniston Bay, Backsberg, Bouchard Finlayson, Cape Maclear, De Toren, Flagstone, Fleur du Cap, Golden Kaan, Klein Constantia, Kumala, Kumkani, KWV, La Motte, Lindhorst, Lomond, Nederburg, Pearl Bay, Quoin Rock, Robertson, Roodeberg, Seidelberg, Simonsig, Tall Horse, Thelema, Two Oceans, Vergelegen, Vilafonte and Zulu.**





These brands were accompanied by several South African producers that are not represented in Russia as yet. These were *Avondale, Boschendal, Bellingham, Eikendal, Idiom* and *Whalehaven*.

In the run-up to the Festival extensive PR campaign was conducted. Using the information on the Sustainable Wine South Africa and the new certification seal as the focal points of interest all wine, life-style and business mass-media was contacted. The response was very good with many internet and printed media publishing articles on South Africa and its new systemic sustainability approach. The Festival media partner – wine magazine “Imperia Vkusa” (Empire of Taste) – was publishing materials on South African wine industry in every issue since the beginning of the year. Monthly newsletters in Russian mailed by WOSA monthly also made considerable impact. One month prior to the event a special web-site for registration to attend the Festival was launched.



Since the purpose of the Festival was to promote the South African wine category on the market, the main target group of the invitation campaign was the wine trend-setters: wine experts and critics, journalists, sommeliers, cavists, restaurateurs and hoteliers. Taking into account that there were also producers whose wines were not imported into Russia as yet, prominent importers and distributors were also targeted. As a result the response to the invitations was overwhelming. A week before the Festival there were over 400 visitors registered on the web-site and the Master-classes were full.

The Festival took place according to the plan on 29 April 2010 at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel in Moscow city centre. It was opened by the official welcome from the Ambassador of South Africa in Russia Dr. Bheki Langa. During the day 17 exhibitors were offering their wines for tasting in the Grand Courtyard hall where video materials on South African wine industry were broadcasted on the big screen and popular South African music was playing. Two Master-classes on actual topics of the South African winemaking were held separately for wine journalists and the trade.



The Festival was attended by almost three hundred guests and close to one hundred exhibitors and organizers. Vast majority of the visitors were related to the wine industry: wine retail – 24%, wine wholesale (distribution & import) – 18%, wine education (teachers and students of wine schools and courses) – 12%, HoReCa – 11%, wine journalism – 9%. Less than a third of visitors (26%) were not wine market professionals and this group was mainly constituted by

businessmen, financiers, local and federal government officials and diplomats.

There was a lot of excitement in the air at the show! Both exhibitors and guests were very pleased with the organization and services provided. Participants of the Master-classes were also impressed with the presentations and the information given. The glossy informative catalogue helped to guide the visitors through the process. Overall, it was the real celebration of South African wine! The event went flawlessly with no shortcomings or accidents reported.

The Festival was organized in close cooperation between Wines of South Africa, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa in the Russian Federation. WOSA and the DTI office in Moscow were the main driving forces in preparing the Festival and making it happen and made considerable financial contributions as well. The Embassy provided the necessary organizational and administrative support. A technical organizer – the Export Group – was hired to handle the technical issues of running the Festival. Overall it was a good example of concerted effort and fruitful cooperation!

Many participants, including producers from South Africa, expressed their full satisfaction with the organization of the Festival, the quality of attending public and support provided. They also expressed their hope that the Festival will become a regular yearly event and confirmed their interest to participate in future actions.

The event will be further supported by the follow-up PR campaign. Most journalists attending the show requested the press-release on the results of the Festival which will be provided to them. Many guests have also asked to put them on the mailing list for the regular updates and newsletters. The Russian Round of





the Sommelier World Cup will also serve as a natural sequel to the Festival. The competition is organized by the Festival media partner – “Imperia Vkusa” wine magazine – in St.Petersburg on 25 May 2010 and is attracting a lot of attraction from the wine market professionals and general public already!

Best regards

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