



Australian Government
Australian Trade Commission

Wine to Switzerland.

Trends and opportunities

The market

The consumption of alcoholic drinks is declining in Switzerland and in Western Europe. Both spirits and fermented beverages such as wine, beer or cider were consumed less over the past few years. Nevertheless, compared to the international level Switzerland still ranks among the top consumers.

Around 54.7 per cent of the wine consumed in Switzerland is imported, a figure which increased in recent years as consumers became increasingly discerning. Swiss vintners failed to market and position their products appropriately, and import barriers were reduced in line with GATT directions. The import share is particularly high for red wine (70 per cent), as demand far exceeds domestic production, whereas Swiss vintners can meet at least 71 per cent of demand for white wine.

The Swiss consumer is generally prepared to pay a reasonable price for wine, however, recently there has been an **increased demand for mid-priced wines**, a trend which was less prevalent in the boom of the 90's. Although the cheaper Australian wines available in supermarkets are readily consumed, there is a growing scepticism towards mass importation of wine and therefore perhaps a chance for the smaller wine growers in Australia to push the unique aspects of their product.

Demand is spread fairly evenly over the price range, with around 30 per cent of consumers usually buying wine at less than CHF8.00 (white) or CHF10.00 (red), another 30-33 per cent preferring a rather narrow lower-medium category from CHF8.00-12.00, and 35 per cent of consumers tending to buy in a more broad upper-medium category of wines between CHF12.00-CHF20.00 per bottle. Prices of more than CHF20.00 are rarely paid except for absolute top wines, and their share is rather small at about five per cent.

There is a trend towards more upmarket wines. Distributors agree that consumers are increasingly moving towards the slightly more expensive end of the market, substituting quantity for quality. A large influx of imported wines has led to growing consumer sophistication, and wine has become more of an everyday product, no longer reserved to holiday seasons and celebrations.

With a growing general interest in wine and increasing demand for better quality products, the environment for specialist retailers is positive, and they should be able to maintain their share. Even if they can't always compete with the lower prices offered by supermarkets, a developing premium product range that requires expert advice should give them a competitive advantage at the more expensive end.

Opportunities

Red wine is still the wine type most widely consumed in Switzerland, supported in recent years by claims that regular, moderate consumption of red wine is beneficial to health. Red wine therefore fits in well with the macro-trend towards healthier lifestyles.

Organically grown wine has yet to make a lasting impact in Switzerland. Initial interest in the early-1990s petered out, and many consumers, although generally in favour of organic produce, were deterred by high prices. However, there are signs that business is finally picking up and crossing from an alternative niche into the mainstream.

Competitive environment

The past 15 years has witnessed the **steady increase of the import and consumption of Australian wine** in Switzerland. While Australian wine still enjoys a favoured position with Swiss wine consumers, the recent increase in the diversity and aggressive pricing of New World wines available in Swiss shops and restaurants, as well as a marked return to the palate of the European wines (particularly those of Italy, Spain and Portugal), represents a change from the general attitude to Australian wine in Switzerland.

Australia is the fifth largest importer of wine into Switzerland. Recently Italy has outstripped France as

Switzerland's number one wine importer followed by Spain and the USA.

More information

For further information please contact Austrade on 13 28 78 or email info@austrade.gov.au

(Last updated: February 2006)

Call Austrade on 13 28 78 or [Email us](#)
© 2006 Australian Trade Commission