

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Mot Hennessy scales the Himalayas for untouched terroir

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Mot Hennessy's Ao Yun, 2013 vintage

By STAFF REPORTS

Mot Hennessy has unveiled its first of vintage Chinese wine following years of research.

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The spirits division of LVMH has produced Ao Yun using grapes harvested from the Yunnan province near the city of Shangri-La. Located at the sacred Meili Mountain, just on the edge of the Himalayas, the vineyards rise up to altitudes of 8,530 feet, resulting in a unique terroir for wine production.

Up in the clouds

Expanding Mot Hennessy's spirits offerings into Chinese wine varieties was conceived by Christophe Navarre, chairman and CEO of Mot Hennessy. Mr. Navarre selected the edge of the Himalayas for the winery venture due to its virgin terroir where vineyards have never been planted.

The Yunnan region is also hailed for its rich culture and stunning landscapes, making the area ideal for a vineyard location.

Ao Yun translates to "flying above the clouds," a nod to the cloud coverage on the summits of the Himalayas.

Grapes used for Ao Yun are French in origin, and it was estate director Maxence Dulou and Mot Hennessy's challenge to grow the fruit at such a high altitude.



Meili Mountain in the Yunnan region of China

After years of research, North Yunnan was selected as the ideal land for the grape's success. The vineyard hugs the banks of the Mekong river, offering the vines intense sunshine and cool nights due to the altitude.

Ao Yun grows on terraces, much like rice, on the steep mountainside and has been planted in small parcels totaling 30 hectares surrounding four villages. Mot Hennessy's Ao Yun venture has also created jobs in the region, with local residents harvesting the grapes by hand and assisting in production.

The first wine yielded from the estate is a 2013 vintage.

Chinese interest and consumption in local and foreign vintages has grown recently.

In 2015, Le Pan, a international magazine and Web site, launched with the aim of redefining coverage of the fine wine industry with an emphasis on modern-day fine living.

Published by Hong Kong-based publisher LPM Communications Limited, the imprint, lead by publisher and CEO Jeannie Cho Lee, the first Asian Master of Wine, will have a wine to lifestyle ratio of 80:20. Its origin and connection to the Asian market is a reflection of the region's growing interest in fine wine and luxury goods ([see story](#)).

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