

SE **Business**  
HD **China** brings good fortune to winemaker  
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A GROWING taste among **Chinese** consumers for expensive **wine** is helping a major Queensland label boost its exports.

Mt Cotton winemaker Sirromet is tapping the **Chinese** market through home deliveries – wherever the consumer lives.

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“We’ve had **wine** on the backs of yaks heading into the hills of Mongolia,” Sirromet’s sales and marketing director Rod Hill said.

The home delivery service made up 44 per cent of Sirromet’s **Chinese** revenue last financial year and growth in the year to date had been encouraging, he said.

Mr Hill said the value of sales in its home delivery **business** had grown 52 per cent in the September quarter, compared to the same time last year.

Mr Hill said Sirromet’s Signature premium wines **sold** in **China** for about \$50, while a bottle of its super premium St Jude’s **wine** fetches an impressive \$1000. The latter drop carries a price tag of \$390 in Australia. The large pricing disparity comes, in part, from the high taxes **China** places on **wine** imports.

Mr Hill also said **Chinese** consumers had no preconceptions about Queensland wines and so judged the product on its merits.

Sirromet’s 2010 St Jude’s Shiraz won gold at the 2013 **China Wine** Awards and it’s Signature Collection Merlot won a double gold at this year’s event.

The **company**’s success in **China** (the value of its total exports grew by 14 per cent last financial year) is bucking a wider industry trend in which Queensland **wine** exports to the Asian nation have fallen from earlier highs.

According to Australian Grape and **Wine** Authority senior analyst Mark Rowley, that slump was due in part to austerity measures introduced in **China** in late 2012 aimed at putting the brakes on official corruption.

Mr Hill said the crackdown had affected Sirromet’s **business** in **China**. “That said, we are fortunate that our home delivery **business** has been built on the back of **Chinese** inbound tourism, which in our case is predominantly middle-class **Chinese** private buyers,” he said.

Mr Hill said a large part of Sirromet’s good fortune was based on its efforts to attract **Chinese** tourists to its winery southeast of Brisbane where they could taste the product. Sirromet exported the equivalent of about 120,000 bottles of **wine** to **China** last financial year. Mr Hill said there was huge growth potential in **China** where only 19 **million** people consumed **wine** and only half of those Australian **wine**.

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