

Title:

Food And Drink

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Summary:

Food and drink have become a major part of most people's lives, in particular their social lives. In fact the phrase 'food and drink' produces over 89 million hits on the Google website. Excessiveness in either is of course unhealthy, but perhaps this is one of the reasons why people see good food or good wine as something special, something to treat themselves with.

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Article Body:

Food and drink have become a major part of most people's lives, in particular their social lives. In fact the phrase 'food and drink' produces over 89 million hits on the Google website. Excessiveness in either is of course unhealthy, but perhaps this is one of the reasons why people see good food or good wine as something special, something to treat themselves with.

Guides to good food, wine and restaurants have become big business. Egon Ronay's 'Guide to the Best Restaurants and Gastropubs in the UK' which provides detailed reviews of over 500 restaurants and gastropubs has sold over 2 million copies. Its simple to compare style of awarding up to three stars to each restaurant is clearly a hit with readers.

'The Good Food Guide' edited by Elizabeth Carter sells itself as Britain's leading restaurant guide and is currently in its 56th edition, detailing over 1,500 eateries from gastropubs to high end dining.

Fine wine guides are also a big seller, with books such as Clarke's 'Fine Wine Guide: A Connoisseur's Bible' and Johnson-Bell's 'Good Food, Fine Wine: A Practical Guide to Finding the Perfect Match' both readily available on the internet it is clear that there is a high demand for such guides.

This is not surprising as the United Kingdom is the second largest importer of

wine in the world. Wine sales in the UK increased 25% between 2001 and 2005. In 2004 the estimated wine consumption was 1.2 billion litres. In particular there has been an increase in the consumption of so-called New World wines, for example those from Australia or the USA instead of traditional producers such as France. California now produces 2 billion litres of wine every year, making it the fourth biggest producer behind Italy, France and Spain. In 2004, New World wines accounted for over 55% of total consumption in the UK.

Exports of Australian wines have more than quadrupled in the last decade to reach nearly 800 million litres in 2006, 22% of which went onto the UK market, approximately 176 million litres.

Exports of New Zealand wines to the UK alone have increased from 8.1 million litres in 1997 to 21.9 million litres in 2006.

One factor in the explanation of this is an increase in the availability of fine wine in many supermarkets. Some figures place two-thirds of UK wines sales in supermarkets. Increased demand and competition between large chain supermarkets have increased the variety of wines and producers and made them more accessible to the general public.

A recent report by Vinexpo has predicted that the UK will become Europe's biggest market for wine by 2010. The report which examined the worlds wine producers and consumers also predicted that by 2010 the UK wine sales would be worth £5.5 billion, despite the fact that the UK paid the highest average price per bottle (£3.11), which is equivalent to 28.5 litres per capita compared to an average of 27 litres between 2001 and 2005.

The report also showed that between 2001 and 2005 Australia had overtaken France as the UK's biggest supplier with imports rising 51%. Imports from countries such as the USA and South Africa have also risen during this period which highlights the trend toward New World wines.