

Governor promotes Calif. wines in China

By Napa Register

During Gov. Jerry Brown's trade mission to China this week, Golden State wines were served at an event in Shanghai titled, "California Winemaker's Dinner Meets Chinese Banquet" as well as a VIP reception at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing.

Sales to China helped grow California wine exports to a record \$1.4 billion in sales last year, according to Wine Institute, the trade association representing 1,000 California wineries and affiliated businesses.

According to a press release, China is the state's fifth largest export market with \$74 million in wine sales in 2012, up nearly 20 percent from the previous year.

"Wine is a signature industry for California and one of our state's top agricultural exports," said Robert P. Koch, president and CEO of Wine Institute, who is part of the governor's delegation in China this week. "Our exports to China have nearly doubled in the past two years and the country represents a great opportunity for California wineries."

Napa Valley vintners will present "Taste Napa Valley" April 12-20 in Shanghai, Beijing, Hangzhou and Xi'an.

The Wine Institute will travel with a delegation of 50 vintners from regions around the state May 20-27 with stops in Shanghai, Beijing, Ningbo and Hong Kong for consumer events, tastings and educational seminars for trade and media.

The California Wines Master Class, a new initiative for trade and media covering history, climate, regions, varietals and

food pairing, will debut in cities throughout China during the governor's visit this week.

Since 1985, Wine Institute's International Department has served as administrator of California wine export programs by the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. About 150 California wineries participate in the Wine Institute's International program.