

The road to sweet success

Canada's Inniskillin takes on the world

Whether you are duty free shopping in Dubai, the Caribbean, Istanbul or Micronesia you will surely be reminded of home. That's because Inniskillin's renowned icewines have become the hottest items in duty free and liquor stores all over the world, occupying front-line spots on shelves everywhere and winning over fans and critics alike.

Inniskillin is one of the best-known success stories in Canada. Co-founded in 1975 by Karl Kaiser and Donald Ziraldo, Inniskillin was granted the first winery licence in Ontario since 1929, and now has estate wineries in both the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia and in Ontario's Niagara Peninsula.

The name Inniskillin derives from the famous Irish regiment, the Inniskilling Fusiliers, whose Colonel Cooper served in North America during the War of 1812. For his service, he was granted Crown land which he named the Inniskilling Farm.

Since its inception, Inniskillin has grown premium quality wines from the classic European wine grape, or *vitis vinifera*, and is recognized as the world leader in icewine production. To produce icewine, grapes are frozen on the vine and picked by hand when temperatures drop to between -10°C and -12°C. The frozen grapes are then pressed to release a highly concentrated nectar, rich in sugar, acids and flavour, making icewine the perfect dessert or after-dinner wine. Because of the extremely low yield and exceptionally high level of natural sugar in the

grapes, Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) icewine is both rare and expensive.

After its unprecedented achievement in Bordeaux, France, when it won, in 1991, the Grand Prix d'Honneur for its 1989 icewine, Inniskillin has forged a world-wide distribution network which includes North America, Asia, and most recently Europe. Not only did Inniskillin win a "Gran Medaglia D'Oro" (Great Gold Medal) at Vinitaly 2003 for its 2001 Riesling icewine (VQA Niagara), but it was also awarded three gold medals at the 2003 *Concours Mondial de Bruxelles* in Belgium, winning with its VQA Okanagan 2001 Riesling icewine, 2000 Meritage and 2001 Pinot Noir.

Export advice

When asked how Inniskillin wines became one of the most highly recognized brands of wine in the world, Ziraldo advises: "Research the market and select a reputable distributor that is prepared to invest resources long term to build your brand. Once you select a target market, stay focused on key markets globally and service them regularly. Following up is crucial. You can send 10 people to introduce your product for distribution, but if you don't follow up, no one will remember you."

Keeping it simple has certainly paid off for Inniskillin, whose signature icewine is its only export.

"Staying focused is key. I would never try to sell red wine to Italians, so we kept it simple. In the U.S., for example, we hired one full-time person in New York, Miami, San Francisco, Chicago and Los Angeles to do one thing—sell Inniskillin icewine. Because of these

focused efforts, we now have more than 5,000 accounts across the U.S." Interestingly, Inniskillin's wines are also successful across Europe, particularly in Italy, the United Kingdom and Spain.

DFAIT help

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), through its embassies and consulates, has been a big help in exposing Inniskillin to an international audience. "DFAIT has always provided Inniskillin with a platform to promote our icewine," said Ziraldo. "The Canada Day festivities in Singapore this year was a perfect example; there were over 400 people attending the celebration and I had the opportunity to talk about our icewine. It was a big tasting. These events are very important for us; they go a long way in helping us internationally," he said.

According to Martin Moodie, Editor of *The MoodieReport.com*, "The big, and almost totally unexpected, wine success in duty free has been icewine. A decade ago, anyone predicting that Canadian "stickies" would be a front-line force would have had their sanity questioned. Yet that has been the remarkable achievement by Inniskillin."

Like all successful companies whose products started off as "fringe" items, it took leadership and vision to make icewine the big seller it has become today. Says Moodie: "Inniskillin is a unique case study in this industry. It has come from left field to occupy centre stage in the business. Along the way, it has lifted the whole wine category and proven there is a role for new sectors, for those who dare to be different, for those with imagination."

For more information, contact Donald Ziraldo, Inniskillin Wines, tel.: 1-888-466-4754, ext. 301, e-mail: dziraldo@inniskillin.com, Web site: www.inniskillin.com. *

Trade events calendar

AEROSPACE & DEFENCE

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES — December 7-11, 2003 — The **Dubai Airshow** is one of the world's leading aerospace events and will include a Canadian pavilion. **For more information**, contact Anne Argyris, Consul and Senior Trade Commissioner, Canadian Embassy in Abu Dhabi, e-mail: anne.argyris@dfait-maeci.gc.ca, or Derek Staines, EAS Exhibition Services, e-mail: derek@easeexhibitions.com, tel.: (905) 837-5095, Web site: www.dubaiairshow.org.

AGRICULTURE, FOOD & BEVERAGES

LONDON, ENGLAND — November 26-30, 2003 — The **BBC Good Food Show** is the largest consumer food and drink show in Europe. **For more information**, contact the show organizer, tel.: (011-44-20) 8948-1666, e-mail: laura@consumer-exhibitions.co.uk, or contact the Canadian High Commission in London, tel.: (011-44-20) 7258-6663, fax: (011-44-20) 7258-6384, e-mail: ldn-td@dfait-maeci.gc.ca, Web site: www.bbcgoodfoodshow.co.uk/index.asp.

HONG KONG — February 10-13, 2004 — The **10th Asian International Exhibition of Hospitality Equipment, Supplies and Technology, Food and Drink (HOFEX)** is a unique opportunity for Canadian food exporters to access buyers from Asian markets including Greater China, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines and Macao, among others. **For more information**, contact Kitty Ko, Commercial Officer, Canadian Consulate General in Hong Kong, e-mail: kitty.ko@dfait-maeci.gc.ca, tel.: (011-852) 2847-7448, fax: (011-852) 2847-7441.

ARTS & CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

GUADALAJARA, MEXICO — November 29-December 7, 2003 — The **Guadalajara International Book Fair** is the largest Spanish-language book event in the world. **For more information**, contact Juan-Carlos Munoz, Canadian Consulate in Guadalajara, tel.: (011-52) 3615-6215, fax: (011-52) 3615-8665, e-mail: juan-carlos.munoz@dfait-maeci.gc.ca, Web site: www.fil.com.mx.

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA — December 7-9, 2003 — The **Australian Effects & Animation Festival** will focus on the creative and technical secrets behind some of the biggest VFX and animation projects from Hollywood and around the world. **For more information**, contact Sharon Pinney, Culture and Communications Officer, Canadian Consulate General in Sydney, e-mail: sharon.pinney@dfait-maeci.gc.ca.

BUILDING PRODUCTS

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES — November 19-29, 2003 — **BIG 5** is the largest annual event for the booming construction industry in the Gulf and Middle East region. **For more information**, contact Sanam Shahani, Commercial Officer, Canadian Embassy in Dubai, e-mail: sanam.shahani@dfait-maeci.gc.ca, or Terry Gain, Big 5 Representative in Canada, e-mail: cgain@interlog.com.

SHANGHAI, CHINA — November 18-21, 2003 — Held on a biennial basis, **Building Shanghai 2003** is the leading Chinese exhibition for building materials and services as well as interior design. **For more information**, contact Claire Zhang, Senior Commercial Officer, Canadian Consulate General in Shanghai, e-mail:

claire.zhang@dfait-maeci.gc.ca, tel.: (011-86-21) 6279-8400, fax: (011-86-21) 6279-7456, Web site: www.2456.com.

ENVIRONMENTAL INDUSTRIES

ARUSHA, TANZANIA — November 17-19, 2003 — **Hydro Africa 2003** is an international hydro power conference. **For more information**, contact the Canadian High Commission in Tanzania, tel.: (011-255-22) 211-2837, e-mail: dslam-td@dfait-maeci.gc.ca, or go to www.ich.no/hydroafrica.html.

BEIJING, CHINA — December 8-19, 2003 — The **Trade Team Canada Environment Mission** will be a part of the **China International Environment Protection Exhibition and Conference** and will visit Hong Kong, the Pearl River Delta, Shanghai and Qingdao. The focus will be on sustainable urban infrastructure. **For more information**, contact John Beveridge, Environmental Affairs Branch, Industry Canada (Vancouver), e-mail: beveridge.john@ic.gc.ca, tel.: (604) 666-1416, fax: (604) 666-8330, or Nichole Tremblay, Environmental Affairs Branch, Industry Canada (Ottawa), tel.: (613) 952-1572, fax: (613) 952-9564, e-mail: tremblay.nichole@ic.gc.ca.

FOREST INDUSTRIES

SHANGHAI, CHINA — December 16-19, 2003 — The **South China International Exhibition for Timber, Plywood, Veneer and Related Equipment**. **For more information**, contact Sarah Wu, Commercial Officer, Canadian Consulate General in Guangzhou, e-mail: sarah.wu@dfait-maeci.gc.ca, Web site: www.globalwood.org/ads/chinafair.htm.

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