

Barely a month after a very successful trip to Tokyo and Fukuoka, Japan last September, Joseph's Estate Wines is already responding to distributorship offers from small trading companies, hotels

Commissioner at the Canadian Consulate in Fukuoka," she adds, "who in turn consulted with Greg Giokas, Counsellor (Food and Consumer Products), at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo."

Canadian Icewine toast of Japan

and restaurants and has entered into negotiations with some of the largest distributors in Japan.

The crowning glory for the Niagara-on-the-Lake small winery was the accolade it received at the International Trade Fair in Fukuoka where Joseph's Icewine obtained the highest rating from participants at the wine seminar. This bi-annual fair held September 13-16 — it is usually used as a testing



From left to right: Minister Peter Campbell, Canadian Embassy, Tokyo; Joseph Pohorly, President and Owner, and Flordeliz Legarda-Custodio, Vice-President, Export, Joseph's Estate Wines; and Counsellor Greg Giokas at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo.

ground for new products in Japan — drew more than 77,000 people.

CanadExport acts as trigger

"It was back in February," recalls Flordeliz Legarda-Custodio, Vice-President, Export, at Joseph's, "when we read a short article in that month's first issue of *CanadExport* about the upcoming Fukuoka International Trade Fair 2001.

"As suggested, we contacted Josiane Simon, Consul and Trade

So the wheels were set in motion for Joseph's to kill two birds with one stone.

Trade Commissioner support

"If you are coming all the way to Fukuoka, why not stop by at the Embassy in Tokyo," was the advice to Joseph's from Canada's Trade Commissioners.

So an Icewine tasting event was hosted by the Canadian Embassy in

Tokyo and attended by key executives from Japanese wine importers, wholesalers, the press, and associations of chefs and five-star hotels.

The wine seminar and tasting event in Fukuoka also involved table wines and fruit wines from other Canadian suppliers — from British Columbia and Newfoundland.

"But key to the success of the wine tasting events in both Tokyo and Fukuoka," recalls Legarda-Custodio, "was the support received from the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service in both cities, in particular Minister (Economic/Commercial) and Senior Trade Commissioner Peter Campbell; Counsellor Greg Giokas; Noburo Shimizu, Commercial Officer; Consul Josiane Simon; and Kazuhiro Uemura, Commercial Officer in Fukuoka, who assisted in the events."

Leading the visiting delegation were Joseph Pohorly, President, Owner of Joseph's Estate Wines, and Legarda-Custodio, who organized both events.

A really "cool" business

Joseph Pohorly is a legend in the wine industry. Original founder of Newark Wines in 1978 — it became Hillebrand Estate Wines five years later — he took his expertise gained from previous successes and founded Joseph's Estate Wines in 1992.

"Located in the heart of Niagara's Wine Country, the 20-acre estate employing some 30-35 people — it depends on the season," explains Legarda-Custodio, "has been recognized within the industry and abroad for producing a variety of award-winning wines."

Icewines are dessert wines made from grapes harvested at temperatures between -8 to -10°C degrees, usually in the evening or early morning. Vidal grapes are harvested by hand and slowly squeezed, yielding concentrated, intensely sweet drops of juice.

"As a matter of fact," she says, "back in 1983, Joseph Pohorly was one of the first in Canada to make Vidal Icewine. The 1998 VQA Joseph's Vidal Icewine received 'The Grand Champion American Airlines Trophy' for the Best Commercial Dessert wine and a Gold Medal on July 28, 2001."

Little wonder the Japanese are eager to sign contracts for such highly prized products. As for Joseph's — in addition to sending samples to prospective customers — it is seriously considering participating in FOODEX 2002, a trade show slated for Tokyo next March, to build on its initial market penetration in Japan.

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