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Zhou Hongjiang (left), general manager of Changyu Pioneer Wine Co, presents its 300 millionth bottle of its Jiebaina vintage to Wang Qi, secretary-general of the China Alcoholic Drinks Association.



JU CHUANJIANG / CHINA DAILY

International guests visit Changyu's 1,200-square-meter pavilion at the ongoing 6th Yantai International Wine Expo.



WANG QIAN / CHINA DAILY

Noted Italian sommelier Hakan Kivanc savors the bouquet of Changyu wine at a tasting event on June 27.

Changyu celebrates 120 years of wine

By WANG QIAN in Yantai
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Changyu Pioneer Wine Co, China's oldest and largest wine producer, held a series of activities from June 26 to 28 to mark its 120th anniversary.

The celebrations attracted more than 600 people from around the world to Yantai, the home of the company, including representatives of the world's leading wineries and officials from China Alcoholic Drinks Association.

"As China's first winery, established in 1892, Changyu has made lots of achievements in the past 120 years. But we won't rest on our laurels, and we strive to seek more robust growth," said Zhou Hongjiang, general manager of Changyu.

The celebration was kicked off with a grand concert staged at Yantai Sports Park on the evening of June 26.

The following day, a tasting and appraisal event was

held at Changyu Wine Culture Museum, where 23 world-famous wine experts commented on 20 types of Changyu wines and liquors, ranging from its bestselling Changyu Jiebaina Dry Red Wine to the award-winning Century Cellar Dry Red Wine and VSOP Brandy.

"The Changyu Jiebaina Dry Red Wine is a very fruity one on the nose. The oak flavor is well integrated by the wine. The finish is complex, with an aroma like a cigar box," said Nicolas Besse, CEO of French Seguin Moreau, one of the world's premier manufacturers of barrels for aging wine.

"The Changyu Century Cellar Dry Red Wine has quite good color and transparency. Its taste is soft and smooth," said Wang Junyu, one of China's top sommeliers, or wine experts.

Sommelier Pierre Barthe from France said he is "glad to see that Changyu can produce great white wines, red wines, sweet wines and brandies — all different products but all at a very high level."

"They compete very well with the French wines," he said. During the festivities, Changyu presented 300 millionth bottle of its Jiebaina to the China Alcoholic Drinks Association.

Changyu Jiebaina was created in 1931 and rated as one of the world's top 30 wine brands in 2008 Salon International de l'Alimentation, a food and drink expo held in France.

Since 2006, it has been exported to some 28 countries and regions across the world,



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Cheng Davis (second left), Westgate Group board member, talks about wine with Paul K. Kelly (second right), chairman of Changyu Kely Estate of New Zealand.

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ZHOU HONGJIANG
GENERAL MANAGER OF CHANGYU

including Germany, Italy and France. It was the first wine from a Chinese company to gain wide recognition in Europe mainstream and can be bought in more than 3,000 super markets, shops, five-star hotels in Europe and even the first-class cabins of Lufthansa German Airlines.

Other activities included a Chinese grape and wine technology development forum, the Changyu wine dealer award ceremony and a con-

temporary Chinese art show.

Latest programs

Changyu announced an ambitious plan to establish a 413-hectare international wine city on the outskirts of Yantai, with an estimated investment of 6 billion yuan (\$942.6 million). The project, expected to be completed by 2016, will be home to a national vine and wine research institute and a wine production center. It will also include grape

planting areas, an international wine trading center, a European-style village as well as the Tinlot wine chateau and Koyac brandy chateau, which are both targeting high-end market.

The wine production center will be equipped with 15 advanced production lines imported from Europe and cover an area of 220,000 square meters. It is anticipated to be one of the world's largest wine and brandy production plants, with an estimated annual pro-

duction of 400,000 tons.

It is also expected to be an integration of research, wine-making as well as cultural tourism, and the company has pledged to make it into China's first 5A-class wine-themed scenic spot.

The company also announced it will seek more cooperation with the world's leading wine producers under its Pioneer International Chateau Alliance project and establish 1,000 stores to sell the alli-

ance's wine across the nation in three years.

In 2009, Changyu teamed with four prominent chateaus in New Zealand, France and Italy to establish the alliance, the first of its kind in the world.

"Changyu will spare no effort to develop the alliance and look for more cooperation with prominent chateaus to provide consumers various wines from 18 major winemaking centers worldwide," Zhou said.

Visionary idea, global growth today

By ZHANG ZHAO in Yantai
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When Qing Dynasty diplomat Zhang Bishi returned to his homeland from overseas to found Changyu Pioneer Wine Co in Yantai, Shandong province, 120 years ago, he might not have expected it to become the world-class wine company that it is today.

Changyu first won international acclaim in 1915, when the company made its worldwide debut at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and won gold medals for four of its products — brandy, Red Rose, Ver-

mouth and Riesling.

One of the few Chinese medal-winners at the exhibition, the company presented more than 4,000 products, including wine, liquor, tea and porcelain.

A local San Francisco newspaper billed Changyu's success as "most incredible", considering the 20-year-old company had bested many time-tested European rivals.

After New China was founded in 1949, Changyu's products, including its Special Fine Brandy, Vermouth and red wine, were listed among the nation's top eight famous alcoholic drinks in

1952, 1963 and 1979.

One of the best-known products of Changyu, its Jiebaina dry red wine, was awarded a gold medal at a quality products selection held in Brussels in 1987.

And in that same year, the city of Yantai, where Changyu's home office is located, became the first Asian city to be recognized as an "International Vine and Wine City" by the predecessor of the International Organization of Vine and Wine.

In 2006, Changyu was listed as one of the top 20 Chinese brands by Business Week magazine and the

international brand consultant firm Interbrand. It has also been recognized as a well-known trademark and China Top Brand by Chinese authorities.

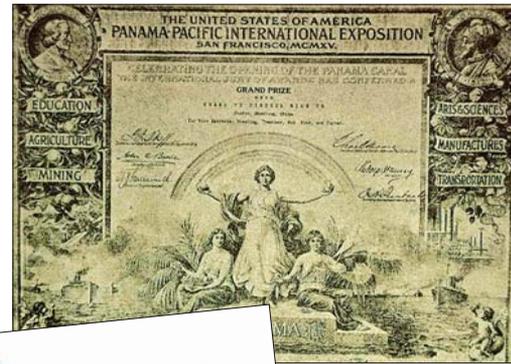
At the 2008 SIAL exhibition, an international food and drink expo held in Paris, Changyu Jiebaina was the only Asian wine to be selected as one of the world's top 30 brands.

In the following year, an international association of seven world famous chateaus was established, with Changyu as the leader.

The company's brand was evaluated at \$3.2 billion, according to the Wall Street Journal's top 20 Chinese brands list, unveiled at the end of last year. Around 400 of its trademarks have been registered worldwide in more than 40 countries and regions.

Changyu is now also served at state banquets. Since November 2009, the wine produced at the Chateau Changyu AFIP Global has appeared on state banquet tables 29 times, where it was sampled by guests including US President Barack Obama, Russian President Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister David Cameron.

Changyu won grand prize at the Panama Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco in 1915.



PHOTOS BY JU CHUANJIANG / CHINA DAILY

Century-old oak barrels are preserved in the underground cellar at the Chateau Wine Museum housed in a building that dates back to 1905.



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Changyu Kely Estate in New Zealand, a member of the International Chateau Alliance.



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The signing ceremony for the International Chateau Alliance comprised of Changyu and other world-famous chateaus. The alliance formed in 2009 is the first of its kind in the world.