

LISTENING COMPREHENSION – AUSTRALIAN WINES AT RISK (2'10 min)

You are going to hear a news report about the effects of climatic changes in Australia on the wine industry.

I) Before listening, read the list of vocabulary and try to guess what the three phrases below might mean (1-2 sentences each).

Vocabulary:

a booming industry	a very successful economic sector
a key ingredient	a very important element
a draught	a period without rain
grape harvest	(here:) the number of collected grapes
to promote	to advertise
premium range	(here:) high quality wine
a major success story	a business idea which has brought in a lot of money
to cash in on sth.	to make money with sth.
a widespread shortage	a situation where sth. is not available anywhere
the market in Asia and beyond	(here:) the wine producers from Asia and other regions
competitive	if a product is as good or even better than another product
<i>Down Under</i>	Australia

- *another key ingredient has been lacking*

- *affordable mass-market wine*

- *many brands have been bought out by global drinks firms*

II) Now listen to the recording twice; take notes while listening and answer the questions below (2-3 sentences each):

1. Which are the two key elements to Australia's fruity wines mentioned in the recording? What problems do Australian winemakers face with one of the two elements?
2. How was the climatic situation in Australia last year? What has been predicted for this year? How are the periods of dry climate linked to Australian wine?
3. According to Philip Laffer, is the current climatic situation in Australia connected to global warming?
4. Are prices for Australian wines going to increase rapidly? Why would higher prices of Australian wines have a worldwide effect?
5. Which effects might the draught in Australia have on winemakers in other countries?

Hunter Valley, in New South Wales; it's part of a booming industry that now exports 400 million liters of wine a year and sells the same amount again to Australians at home. Sunshine is the key to Australia's fruity style of wine, and there's no shortage of that. But recently, another key ingredient has been lacking. The worst draught in living memory hit the continent last summer, and the forecasts are that this summer could be as bad. Last season's grape harvest was down by half.

Philip Laffer is Chief Winemaker at Jacob's Creek, one of Australia's biggest wine brands. He's touring Asia to promote his new premium range. So, how worried is he?

We're going into a dry cycle. With or without the other climate change, we have these sort of fifty year cycles in Australia. And we've learned to live with them and ... On top of that, we had El Niño, droughts more severe than normal, but we're not going to go back to the way life was in the 1990s when we were in a wet cycle, so we have to learn to live with it. Yes, there'll be small price increases in time, but if grape prices go up, let's say in 2008, in the case of red wines it's gonna be two years before these wines actually get to the market place, so it's not something that's going to happen over night.

Affordable mass-market wine has been a major success story for Australia; many brands have been bought out by global drinks firms who have cashed in on world growth in wine drinking. They may now find the economics of the business are changing. No one is predicting a widespread shortage of Australian wines just yet. But prices are definitely going to rise as the industry feels the full effect of the drought. And with the market in Asia and beyond more competitive than ever, wines from down under may be losing some shelf space to their rivals.

Transcript by Bernie Zöttl

original source: www.reuters.com