

MORE CONSISTENT THAN EXPECTED

Some large brands like Coca Cola or Gillette strive to have the same product at the same price in all markets; others tweak their packaging or their price to adapt to local necessities. What do wines brands do? Our panel looked at three wines purchased in supermarkets in nine countries on three continents to answer that question.

MOUTON CADET				JACOB'S CREEK SHIRAZ CABERNET				TORRES CORONAS			
<p>Baron Philippe de Rothschild has been working hard to revive Mouton Cadet, both in terms of packaging and quality. We looked at twelve bottles from nine countries, all of which sported the newly redesigned label. Realizing that quality is the larger issue, the company had already commissioned a survey in 2003 to better understand what the consumer truly wanted. The answer? A more fruit-driven wine. The wine-makers accordingly introduced more stainless steel and increased the percentage of Merlot in the blend. This was more evident in the 2003 on offer on the Dutch and Danish markets - than in the 2002s that we still found on sale in Japan, Spain and, France. Much of the difference between the two wines can of course be attributed to the variation between the two vintages. Nonetheless, however hard producers like Baron Philippe and their competitors in Bordeaux try, the wide vintage variation that has always been a hallmark of their region, will never allow them to compete on level terms with the consistency of their competitors in Chile or Australia.</p>				<p>Although the full range of Jacob's Creek is quite large, the Shiraz-Cabernet is the core brand in this portfolio and represents a large share of total production. Not surprising for a multinational, the packaging was absolutely consistent; the content, however, was not. Horses for courses, you might say. Still, although giving equal marks to both styles, our panel noted that the bottling for the British market was somewhat drier, slightly more tannic and certainly more classical. In other markets the wine appeared softer, sweeter and more succulent, in a style that many more clearly associate with Australia. As the United Kingdom alone consumes 52% of total production, catering to that market makes sense. Pricing in our random purchases worldwide were more consistent than that of Mouton Cadet and our jury gave better marks in value for money.</p>				<p>In terms of quality consistency Miguel Torres was the clear victor in our panel's tasting. There was no difference in the style sold in the various markets where we were able to find the wine. We were surprised, however, not to have found Coronas at either of the Sainsbury or Tesco stores in England where we bought our other samples. All we saw was Viña Sol. Interestingly, Coronas is sold as a Tempranillo Crianza in Spain and only as a Tempranillo in export. Apparently the company's research has shown that Crianza is either little understood outside of Spain or adds no value to the packaging. It was also revealing that Torres has evidently decided that the premium version of Coronas, the Gran Coronas, is a better commercial prospect as a Cabernet Sauvignon than as a Tempranillo Reserva. Importers in continental Europe, will also be interested to notice the low shelf price in the domestic market.</p>			
PURCHASE PRICES WORLDWIDE				PURCHASE PRICES WORLDWIDE				PURCHASE PRICES WORLDWIDE			
Bought in	at	in €	in US \$	Bought in	at	in €	in US \$	Bought in	at	in €	in US \$
Australia	-	-	-	Australia	9.99 AUD	5.95	7.50	Australia	-	-	-
Denmark	50 DKK	6.70	8.50	Denmark	42 DKK	5.75	7.15	Denmark	53.95 DKK	7.25	9.25
England	6.99 £	10.50	13.50	England	5.49 £	8.25	10.30	England	-	-	-
France:	9.90 €	9.90	12.75	France	-	-	-	France	-	-	-
Germany	8.49 €	8.49	11.00	Germany	5.95 €	5.95	7.60	Germany	6.99 €	6.99	8.95
Holland	11.00 €	11.00	14.00	Holland	7.50 €	7.50	9.60	Holland	8.99 €	8.99	11.50
Japan	1,680 JPY	11.50	14.75	Japan	1,080 JPY	7.25	9.25	Japan	1,575 JPY	10.50	13.50
Russia	-	-	-	Russia	-	-	-	Russia	-	-	-
Spain	11.50 €	11.50	14.75	Spain	-	-	-	Spain	4.65 €	4.65	5.95
USA	7.99 \$	6.25	7.99	USA	6.99\$	5.50	6.99	USA	8.99 \$	7.00	8.99
PRODUCTION: 9,000,000 BOTTLES				PRODUCTION: 20,000,000 BOTTLES				PRODUCTION: 3,400,000 BOTTLES			
EXPORT: 75%				EXPORT: 84%				EXPORT: 43%			
											