

# Winepeek 聞品 美酒世界

January 1, 2018

#HAPPY2018 #CHEERS #WINESOFCHINA



HAPPY 2018!

2017 was notable for me as a British-Chinese wine writer based in the UK. Two of the largest British supermarket chains, Sainsbury's and Tesco, have started stocking wines of China, produced by the oldest Chinese commercial winery Changyu Pioneer Wine Company. So to ring in the new year, my celebratory wines are one white and two reds from China, available from British supermarkets, all priced at or under £10 per bottle:

**Changyu Noble Dragon Riesling, Yantai, China, 12% ABV**

**£10 from Sainsbury's**



This wine has a golden colour, with a nose of fresh flowers, lemon and pineapple, quite tropical. The palate is greeted with more ripe fruits, peaches and melon, balanced with clean and fresh acidity. This is a bright and balanced wine, no wood treatment, off-dry with medium body and a good length. It would pair well with seafood and Chinese food, including dim sum and spicier dishes such as those from Sichuan.

**Changyu Noble Dragon Cabernet Gernisht, Yantai, China, 12% ABV**

**£10 from Sainsbury's**



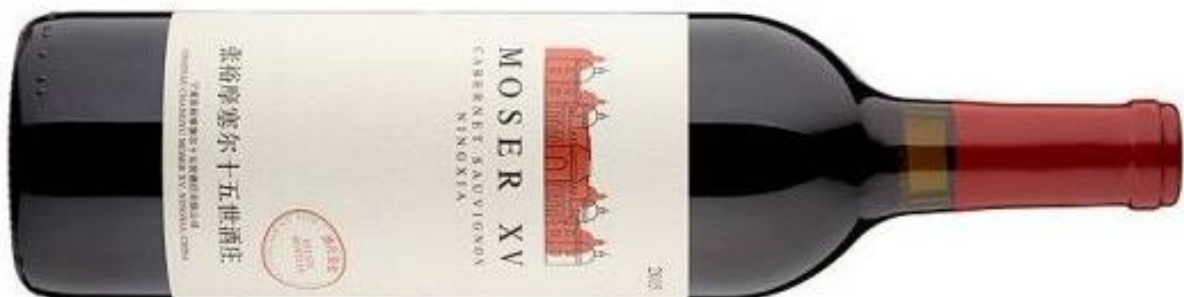
Cabernet Gemischt is the name for Carménère in China, possibly derived from a mis-spelling of ‘Cabernet gemischt’ — the German term for mixed Cabernet — mixed vine cuttings introduced to China by Changyu Winery in the 19th century.

This wine is a red blend of mostly Cabernet Gemischt with some Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. It is aged for six months in small oak barrels.

The wine is a deep ruby colour, with a nose of ripe dark berries and hints of smoke and wood. On the palate it serves up plenty of dark jammy berries. Mid-palate the tannins and acidity become more prominent. It is medium-bodied, fairly well-balanced although the length is quite short. It could pair well with poultry and meat dishes and aromatic cuisines.

**Moser XV Cabernet Sauvignon 2015, Ningxia, China, 14% ABV**

**£8.50 from [Tesco](#)**



This wine is a vivid ruby colour, with a generous nose of ripe blackcurrant, dark berries, and some hints of spicier notes like cinnamon and cloves. On the palate the ripe, juicy blackcurrants and spices follow through, with subtle notes of eucalyptus. It is well balanced, rounded with a soft finish. It will compliment festive or Sunday roasts as well as strong flavoured Chinese cuisine.

## **QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE WINE REGIONS AND CHANGYU WINERY**

(Taken from my forthcoming book – *Heavenly Nectar: history and renaissance of wine in China*. [Watch this space for future updates!](#))

**Shandong Province (latitude 35 – 38)**

This historical winemaking region boasts the highest wine sales by volume and by value in China. It is a flat peninsula with some hills in the centre, and has a maritime climate with mild winters but cool and wet summers. The notable wine-producing areas are Yantai, Penglai and Qingdao. The main grape varieties grown here are Cabernet Gernischt (Carménère), Riesling, Chardonnay and Bordeaux varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon.

### **Ningxia Autonomous Region (latitude 35 – 39)**

Ningxia is emerging as a star region for China's modern wine industry and wine is the key economic driver for the area. This expanse of land in northwestern China borders the Gobi desert. A cold arid and semi-arid climate offers plenty of warmth and, light and low rainfall, but also extremely low temperatures in the winter. High-quality winemaking conditions are made possible by the Helan Mountains which shield the foothills from cold winds, and a well-irrigated valley thanks to the Yellow River. Most wineries are built around the eastern foothills of the Helan Mountain range. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are the most planted varieties here, along with Cabernet Gernischt, Syrah, Marselan, Chardonnay and Riesling.

### **Changyu Winery**

During the Chinese imperial dynasty of Qing (1644 – 1912), imported European grape wines – the sort we could more readily identify with today – made their way across the oceans to China in significant quantities and they were held in great esteem by the Qing court. In 1892, Changyu winery was founded in Yantai, Shandong province, heralding in the first Chinese commercial winery for European-style grape wines on an industrial scale. Changyu winery's founder Zhang Bishi is credited for developing Cabernet Gernischt (the Old-World Carménère) in China. In fact, Zhang Bishi introduced and experimented with no less than 120 European grape varieties.

Today, Changyu Pioneer Wine Co. is one of the largest wine companies in the world. It is prolific in its international collaborations. The Moser XV collaboration was established in 2013 – Château Changyu Moser XV in Ningxia is named after its consultant Laurenz Maria Moser V of Austrian winery Laurenz V.