



## *In the* **MIX**

*Douglas Blyde*  
on the rise  
of innovative  
Chinese  
winemakers

**W**e're hungry hunters,' says Lenz Moser, lifting chopsticks, conductor-like. We eat at Andrew Wong's avant-garde Pimlico dim sum house, where croquettes conceal rabbit curry and torched mushroom buns sprout from 'turf'.

Moser, a fifth-generation Austrian winemaker, is famed for popularising sprightly whites from the national grape, Grüner Veltliner, via 'friendly', 'charming' and 'singing' renditions. However, he long harboured a fascination for China. When on a mission to sell Austrian Veltliner to the People's Republic 13 years ago, he piqued the interest of the CEO of Asia's oldest winery, Château Changyu, who insisted he 'prove himself' by making Chinese Cabernet.

Rather than Shandong, the east-coast home of most of China's wineries, Moser chose Ningxia, 600 miles west of Beijing. 'Ningxia, washed by the Yellow River, is an oasis,' he says. It also basks in 3,000 hours of sunshine a year with cool nights and altitude, preserving freshness in fragrant wines.

With cupolas, fountains and a statue of Moser's grandfather, 'the first person to trellis vineyards', Château Changyu Moser XV winery and museum transforms a landscape of coal mines into a tourist hotspot. Convinced the second-largest trading nation has terroir and drive to become a global wine player, Moser makes quarterly working

pilgrimages. 'China's 1.3 billion are waking up to the Western lifestyle. And in Germany, Xi Jinping is a superstar.'

Noting any suffering 'is outweighed by the goal', Moser taught his eager Chinese team that 'it can be okay to say no' and stopped traditions including harvesting by rote. 'Typically, grapes were picked before the moon festival. But grapes don't care about festivals — let them ripen.'

Showing China is an innovator, Moser's apple-scented white is made entirely from red grapes, while inky reds, including Moser Family Cabernet (£14.95; bbr.com), deliver a big bang of pure fruit.