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China Becomes Armagnac's Biggest Export Market



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Demand for high-end Armagnac rockets in the Far East.

By [AFP](#) with Wine-Searcher staff | Posted Thursday, 04-Oct-2012

China has displaced Britain as the world's biggest importer of [Armagnac](#) following a spectacular surge in sales of the brandy produced in southwestern France.

The Bureau national interprofessionnel de l'armagnac (BNIA), the organization which represents Armagnac producers, has announced that sales to China increased from 125 hectoliters of pure alcohol in 2010 to 935 hectoliters in 2011. Consumption has continued to rise this year.

Sales to Hong Kong nearly doubled, from 292 hectoliters in 2010 to 505 hectoliters in 2011.

Britain, with 600 hectoliters of imports in 2011, remains the second-biggest market for Armagnac but is set to be overtaken by Russia this year.

BNIA president Pierre Tabarin attributed the growing demand from China to declining consumption of rice wine and to "the emergence of a growing middle class," for whom upmarket French products are a status symbol.

Tabarin added that the Chinese market was expanding at an even faster rate in value terms, because of the high demand for vintage and rare bottles of Armagnac.

According to the BNIA, the United States market is continuing to "evolve," but much of the European market is "more difficult" due to the ongoing currency crisis.

Tabarin noted that the move towards a more export-oriented Armagnac industry marked an historic change for the region, which has long had a stronger presence on the domestic market.

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