

Pahrump Valley Times

PAHRUMP VALLEY WINERY GOES GLOBAL

By Mark Waite May 9, 2012

Diners at sophisticated restaurants and hotels a world away in Shanghai, China, will soon be sipping wine bottled at the Pahrump Valley Winery.

Winery owners Bill and Gretchen Loken signed a deal to initially ship 1,000 cases of Barbera, Symphony, Chardonnay and Burgundy wines. They shipped out Friday.

Bill Loken jokingly called it the grape exportation, the grape step forward, even the grape wall of China, a takeoff on popular Chinese slogans in history “Little Pahrump Valley Winery just went global,” he said. “This is a large order for a first order. Having a local winery here in Nevada shipping 1,000 cases to China is pretty amazing.”

That’s about a third of the wine Pahrump Valley Winery exports to different parts of the U.S. every year.



Linda Wong, a third generation Chinese-American who works for Chinese companies, is marketing the product.

Wong said, “China is a very young country in a sense that they’re drinking wine, they’re used to drinking mostly rice wine or more like a stronger alcohol content, that sort of drink. So for wine to be consumed it’s a very new thing,” Wong said. “I’m from Las Vegas and I was really amazed when I came out and drank the wine and thought it was better than any of the other wines I had tasted, even in California or Europe. So when I talked to my people, buyers who were in China, I asked them to make the trip. They also tasted the wine from Pahrump Valley Winery and they agreed,” she said.

Wong said she formerly lived in the San Francisco Bay Area but now resides in Las Vegas, where she became acquainted with the Pahrump Valley Winery.

“I’m amazed at what quality wine we’re getting from Pahrump Valley. That’s why I got permission to market to my people in China, brought them here, convinced them to come,” she said.

Bill Loken said the buyers agreed to the deal in October. It took that long to complete the paperwork and permitting to import the wines. Wong worked with Chinese officials to facilitate the shipment.

“The wine is going to Shanghai and it is earmarked for hotels and high restaurants,” he said. “There is so much that we buy from overseas it’s fascinating that we’re actually exporting to a country we buy so much from. I’d like to say we’re going to get some of our money back.”

It will take time for the taste to be digested and work through the process, Loken said. But he expects regular shipments to China.

“We want to put Pahrump, Nevada on the map. China is going to know where Pahrump is,” Wong said.

But with labels that will be printed in Chinese, Wong said there isn’t a word in Mandarin for Pahrump. She was advised it means “water over the rock,” which could lead to the Chinese characters.