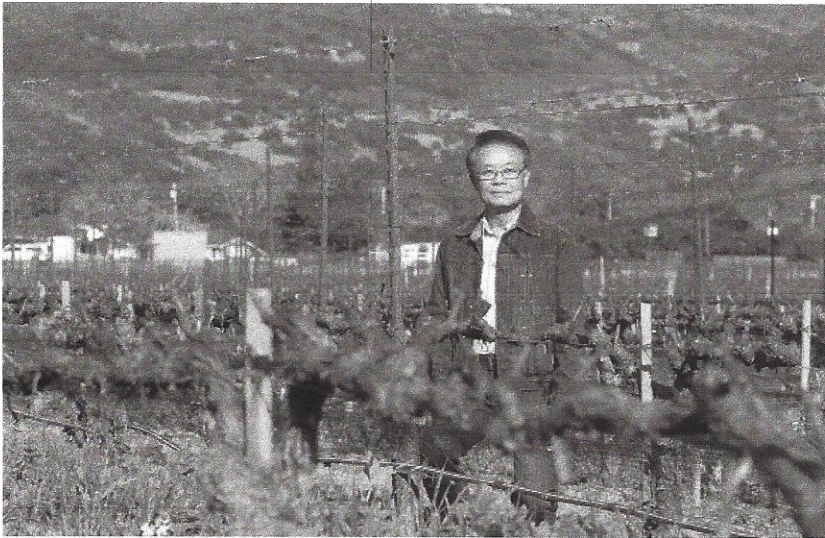


Cal-China Wine Cultural Exchange seeks to open doors across the Pacific

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Register file photo

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Dr. Joe Chuang stands in his Firefly Vineyards in Napa. Chuang, a Taiwanese native who studied chemical engineering, started the vineyard as a hobby. Today, the wine is shipped to China, with proceeds going to help educate children from poor families in rural areas.

The Cal-China Wine Cultural Exchange (CCWCE), a new, nonprofit organization based in Napa, is to begin making a smooth exchange of information on tourism, trade and technical wine-related issues easier.

Dr. Joe Chuang, founder of the 501(c)(3) group, emphasized that he sees the role of CCWCE as supporting the efforts of wine trade organizations as well as tourist and visitor programs throughout California.

"Our goal is to use wine as the media to foster friendship and understanding between the Peoples' Republic of China and state of California," he said. "This could be helping a group coming from China to California who wish for educational wine experiences, or providing expertise for Californians who want to learn about China's emerging wine regions and its wine consumer market."

In August of 2014, CCWCE signed a deal with the People's Government of Huailai county in China for bilateral collaboration in viticulture research and education, exchange of professional associations in viticulture, winemaking technology, and wine tasting. CCWCE will also help set up communications between government officials and business executives in California and China with the aim of establishing the relationship of friendly wine-producing regions for long-term mutual benefits.

Chuang, a Chinese-American scientist, has an international energy research and supply company. He lives in Napa where he is the owner of Firefly Vineyards. Chuang is also the chairman of Flower Valley Winery in Hualai county near Beijing, which is emerging as an important wine grape-growing region in China.

Chuang said his experiences in exporting California wines to China showed the need for more education and understanding of the wine industry on both sides of the world.

"I believe that we can help create a prosperous climate of exchange for visitors and people in the industry," he said. "Increasingly, more and more visitors from China are coming to California. They are a valuable element of our tourist business today and many are interested in visiting California wineries."

To assist in the creation of this nonprofit, CCWCE has enlisted two longtime veterans of the wine industry and of doing business in China.

Tim Hanni, a Master of Wine, has been traveling to China for the past two decades to conduct wine education programs. He is the author of "Why You Like the Wines You Like," and the co-author, with American journalist Sasha Paulsen, of "The Master's Secrets to Enjoying Wine in China," scheduled to be published in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau in 2015.

Wayne Batwin is an international agricultural specialist who lived for many years in Shanghai, where he was director of the U.S. Agricultural Trade Office at the U.S. Consulate. He now lives in the Napa Valley where he works as a consultant for U.S. agricultural businesses, especially wineries, wine companies and trade associations hoping to do business in China. He continues to visit China several times a year.

The first CCWCE project is the creation of a newsletter, available by subscription, that will provide updates from Batwin and Hanni about the wine industry in China, wine consumer trends, and changes in government regulations.

Also in the planning stages are workshops in California and China. For more information about CCWCE, visit the calchina-npo.org.