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08/06/2010

## Aladdin in Hong Kong



Storing cases of fine wine for individuals or businesses lacking space is a global business. Introducing Crown Wine Cellars in Hong Kong. Grégory De'eb, former South African diplomat who has switched over to fine wine storage in Hong Kong. PH. C. C.

You must never tell Grégory De'eb that Crown Wine Cellars is just a warehouse. Admittedly his business here is to store wines but we are far from the surroundings of Thames docklands or gloomy hangars in the heart of an industrial estate. In this exclusive suburb on the heights of Hong Kong Island, where deluxe Hummers are parked outside the elegant colonnades of villas, CWC is barely noticeable at the end of a one-way street called Deep Water Bay Drive.(1).

Discretion is indeed the key for this Asian Aladdin's cave, housing 100,000 cases of wine! Many of these are top-class, and therefore great Bordeaux wines (around 70%). Nothing is visible from the outside because the precious bottles are sleeping deep within the very bowels of the hill which juts out over the road.

This is a unique place and in fact classified a UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Site. And, like our cathedrals, it has known several lives: It was once a pre-war bunker used by the British Army for storing ammunition, then it was taken over by the Hong Kong Police Driving School, and more recently, it has been a warehouse for geological core sample stocks.

"The wine venture began in 2003. While Hong Kong fostered a serious ambition to become the hub for introducing fine wine into the Asian market, there was an Achilles heel ; where to store the cases before their consumption? Here, flats and houses are often short of space" explains Grégory De'eb. Having spent twenty years in China, this former South African diplomat seized the business opportunity via a partnership with Crown, a leading local removals firm.

As tenants of these Government-owned premises, we have 3,500 clients and are increasing by 50 to 100 each month," he adds, sitting among luscious green plants in the restaurant's attractive sun lounge. Because Crown Wine Cellars is not just a cellar, it is also the only genuine underground Private Members' Club in Hong Kong. It offers a library and reception rooms for wine professionals or other personalities, always ready to relax over a glass of wine.

**10 euros per case per year**

"I manage my bottles on my Internet account so I can have them delivered to my home for a dinner," explains Jean-Charles Viens, a Canadian industrialist and long-time resident in Hong Kong and a CWC member.

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#### China Wines Information



The website in Chinese version [www.wines-info.com](http://www.wines-info.com) is dedicated to provide information to Chinese wine practitioners, wine producers, wine distributors, agents, wine importers, wine enthusiasts and high-level consumers. [www.wines-info.com](http://www.wines-info.com)

#### Great Wine Capitals



The Great Wine Capitals is a network of fine major global cities in both the northern and southern hemispheres, which share a key economic and cultural asset: their internationally renowned wine regions. It is the only such network to encompass the so-called 'Old' and 'New' worlds of wine, and exists to encourage travel, education and business exchange between the internationally-renowned centres of Bilbao | Rioja, Bordeaux, Cape Town, Christchurch | South Island, Firenze, Mainz | Rheinhessen, Mendoza, Porto, and San Francisco-Napa Valley.

#### 2009 Bordeaux Barrel Tasting

by James Suckling  
In France's most famous wine region, Bordeaux, some people are touting the 2009 vintage as the mother of great modern vintages. Though the young wines are still aging in the château cellars, the year already has been compared to the classic modern vintages of 2005, 1990, 1989 and 1982. Some people go further back to such legendary years as 1961, 1945, 1929 and even 1899. [www.winespectator.com](http://www.winespectator.com)

#### Wines of South Africa



#### A Richer Bordeaux:

The famed French city has found a new soul



There are several levels of membership, with various services based on storage positions and access use of the club's attractions. The basic rate is 10 euros per case of 12 per year. "In CWC's quarterly newsletter, members are always encouraged to bring their cases, previously kept in other locations, over to Crown," Viens concludes.

In fact, the storage of fine wines – in particular those purchased as futures and therefore delivered at a much later date – is a serious globalized business involving fierce competition. Until recently, London enjoyed a privileged position through the use of an advantageous tax system. Today, Hong Kong is positioning itself for Asian clients and Bordeaux, being the "source" or departure point for most of the bottles, is pulling out all the stops to catch up on its delay.

Thanks to the ministry of finance at Bercy, taxation is now more flexible and Bordeaux City Bond (2) has been established along the banks of the Garonne providing secure protection for these precious cases before they are ultimately transported to far-off parts of the world. Wine merchants are also setting up their own separate storage systems.

(1)www.crownwinecellars.com (2) www.bordeauxcitybond.com

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[www.sudouest.fr](http://www.sudouest.fr)

S.O.

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By Ceil Miller Bouchet Sunday, March , 2010  
It's my first day back in Bordeaux, France, and I'm following a slight man in a Panama hat as he threads through the narrow cobble grid of the old wine-trading neighborhood. Local artist Arnaud Faugas is taking me to see his work.  
[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)



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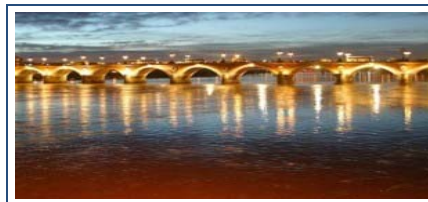
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Bordeaux Wine News



## Bordeaux

**EVENT : "LA FETE DE LA FLEUR":**  
IN QUINCONCES SQUARE, BORDEAUX.  
The prestigious gala evening celebrating the flowering of the vine, "La Fête de la Fleur", will be held on the 25th of June, in the Place des Quinconces, Bordeaux. This exclusive venue is but one of the many events programmed during the "Fête du Vin" (wine festival) which will run from the 24th - 27th June this year. The organiser of the "Fête de la Fleur" party is Emmanuel Cruse, who is head of the Commanderie du Bontemps (Médoc, Graves and Sauternes wine brotherhood). He announced the news on Sunday evening during the Commanderie's traditional Saint Vincent luncheon in Léognan, which united some 500 guests. This Friday, the 22nd of January is the Saint Vincent's Day, the patron saint of wine growers.



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