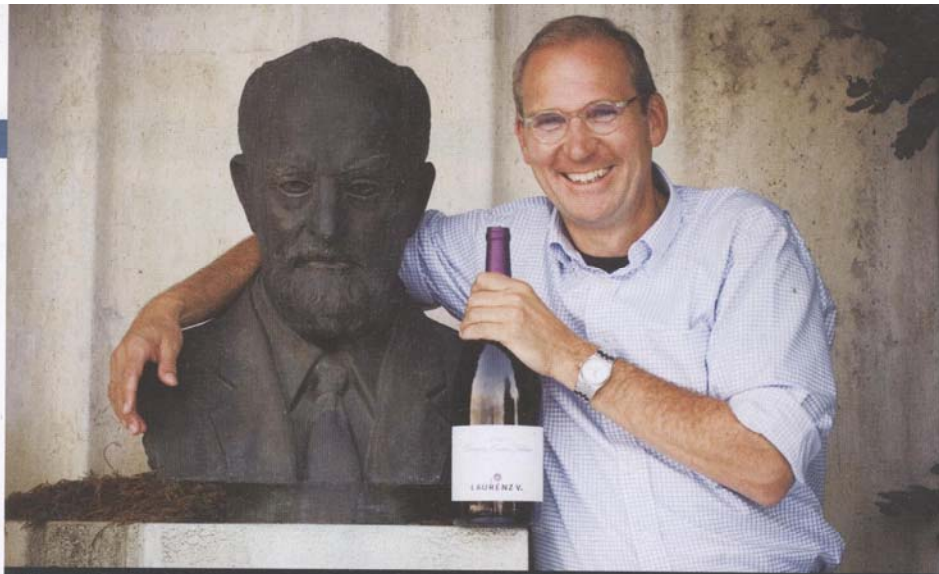


## PERSPECTIVES

In an increasingly difficult global wine market, calls are growing for greater innovation on the part of producers and distributors. We asked a set of leading industry members to share their thoughts on what they think it means to innovate in 2011.



**Lenz Moser is Founder and Director of the Laurenz V. Grüner Veltliner brand in Austria.**

Five years ago, when we started our mission in China, the goal was to import premium wine from China into Europe and to export our Laurenz V. Grüner Veltliners and Prinz von Hessen Rieslings wines to China. We figured that although China was a red wine loving country at the time, there was bound to be a white wine boom one day as well. Together with ever-growing consumption (at a rate of 15-20% a year) this means there will be enormous demand.

The most important topic in dealing with China and its people is to understand the culture and to gain mutual trust. We were lucky enough to find a Chinese person living in Frankfurt who travelled with us 14 times to China and helped us to find a suitable partner and create a very good business relationship. We were also lucky to find Changyu Pioneer Winery in Yantai on our first visit, but it still took us five full years to come to a meaningful contract situation. Changyu is the leading force in the Chinese wine industry, with a sustained growth rate of 20% over the last ten years.

Now, we are importing a premium organic red from Changyu in the Ningxia region and distributing it across Europe. It is made from a grape unique to China called Cabernet Gernischt, which is a cross between Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, grown at an altitude of 1,100m in the Yellow River region of Yinchuan. The main aim was to reduce the yield to 9,000kg/ha in order to get perfect fruit, which would then be processed in Changyu's ultra-modern local pressing and fermentation centre. The first shipments of this wine will take place in May 2011.

We are also exporting Laurenz V. Grüners to China through the newly formed Changyu import division. China is already the sixth largest wine producer in the world, but still needs to import wine to fulfil the exponential growth in wine consumption. Whites are in especially short supply as the acreage of white grapes in China is well below 10%. Two thousand Changyu sales people will help to distribute Grüners in all 30 Chinese provinces (the first containers are on the water already).



**Louise Hurren, is PR consultant to winemakers in Languedoc-Roussillon.**

The biggest challenge facing winemakers today is not making wine; it's selling it. To sell your wine, you need to cut through the clutter and get yourself known. Standing for a whole day on four square metres of carpet at a wine fair is arguably not the most effective thing to do. From the perspective of a press relations consultant, sending out press releases and samples to journalists who are flooded with information and bottles doesn't work as well as it used to. And hosting yet another tasting based on appellations, areas, awards, wine styles or price points is arguably a pointless exercise. It's been done before, so many times.

I earn my living advising winemakers on their communications, and to my mind it's essential to find new, creative ways of presenting wine and communicating about it. Social media and the internet definitely have a role to play. An example of producers working with new media is using Facebook and Twitter to create a buzz about the group, culminating in a 'meet the Outsiders' tasting in London in November 2010, with more trade and press activity planned in other markets, including France in 2011.

Social media was the channel we chose to communicate the group's existence and promote our first event, but the theme of the tasting (wines made by people from other walks of life and other parts of the world) was unusual, and it struck a chord. It gave the press a different kind of angle and plenty of human-interest stories, combined of course with well-made, quality wines. It was a bit of a gamble (we used some unusual imagery in our promotional material) but it worked, and I'm convinced that where wine marketing is concerned, the key lies in being innovative. 'Tried and tested' is dull. 'New and different' is what the wine business desperately needs.