

Speech by FS at opening ceremony of 2015 Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival (English only)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, at the opening ceremony of the 2015 Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival at Central Harbourfront Event Space this evening (October 22):

Peter (Lam), Pierre (Goguet), your excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.

It is indeed my consuming pleasure to join you all for the opening of this year's Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, one of my raving favourites in the annual Hong Kong calendar.

After all, how can an event that combines "festival", which is all about having fun, and "wining and dining", which is all about celebrating the best of life, not be featured in anyone's schedule of "must attends"?

Now in its seventh year, the festival continues to expand. In fact, it's never been bigger. This year's festival boasts more than 340 culinary booths, with wine from 23 countries and regions.

You could call this the jeroboam of wine and dine festivals. As you know, a jeroboam is a huge glass container that holds the equivalent of six 750ml bottles of wine. Just one of those big babies, and you're set for the evening, and on through breakfast.

Thirsts can be slaked by more than wine. Astonishing, perhaps, but true. Yes, this year's festival entices also with whisky, craft beers as well as, I am told, classic afternoon tea.

Wine also shares the spotlight with food. This year's festival features five thematic food zones and a full programme of fine Tasting Room dinners and dainties.

The Wine & Dine Festival was launched in 2009, the year after I

abolished wine duties here. Since then, Hong Kong has emerged as the region's reigning wine hub. And real festival city.

In all this, the Government works closely with the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the connoisseur operator behind the Wine & Dine Festival, as well as Hong Kong Wine & Dine Month, which begins this evening and parties on through November.

So, my thanks to Peter and the Hong Kong Tourism Board. My thanks, also, to the Festival's partner, Pierre and the Bordeaux International Wine & Dine Festival Organisation.

So please raise your glasses and join me in a toast to the Wine & Dine Festival, to what I am sure will be its most memorable year yet.

Thank you very much. Have a great day.

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