

Speech by FS at 2017 Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival opening ceremony (English only)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the opening ceremony of the 2017 Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival at the Central Harbourfront Event Space this evening (October 26):

Peter (Chairman of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Dr Peter Lam), Allan (President of the Bordeaux Wine Council, Mr Allan Sichel), Mr Jiang (the Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of China Construction Bank (Asia) Corporation Ltd, Mr Jiang Xianzhou), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.

It gives me great pleasure to be here this evening, to launch this year's Hong Kong Wine and Dine Festival. Our annual reminder to take life one sip, one bottle, at a time – and my considered prescription for good life.

That's what you can count on at the Wine and Dine Festival: four days and nights of fine wine, fabulous food and great memories in the making.

For that, my sincere thanks to the Hong Kong Tourism Board, and other wine-loving departments, plus our spirited sponsors and co-organisers.

Together, they've been bringing the Wine and Dine Festival to Hong Kong, and a world of happy consumers, since 2009, showcasing world-class food, wine, entertainment as well as the magnificent Victoria Harbour of our city.

Hong Kong, to be sure, does a bang-up job of that year-round. Last year, our wine imports, as well as re-exports, experienced healthy growth.

Indeed, in 2016 we imported a record HK\$12 billion worth of wine from more than 55 countries and regions. And as the Asia-Pacific wine market continues to soar, Hong Kong – the region's wine-trading hub –

can only benefit.

And with more than 14 000 restaurants in Hong Kong, eating may be our major sport. It's certainly our consuming passion. Yes, Hong Kong has it all, from street food that sizzles to more than 60 Michelin-starred restaurants covering some 50 cuisines.

Once you're all wined and dined, it's time to step out. To see the delights of Hong Kong, Asia's world city. From culture to heritage, country parks to theme parks and harbour-night light shows, we've got it all.

So, too, does the Wine and Dine Festival. This year's show features 21 countries and nearly 300 wine booths in five separate wine zones, from Bubbly Gala to the Robert Parker Wine Advocate Pavilion, both brand new here. Plus, feast on well over 100 food booths, including 10 fab restaurants in Feedme Lane, Tasting Room dining courtesy of three of the world's top chefs, and Hotel Delicious.

And in honour of Hong Kong, which this year celebrates its 20th anniversary as a Special Administrative Region of China, enjoy the Festival's 20 Hotspots – everything from a craft beer and whisky zone to a superlative sake stop and, new this year, the Concept Store.

I'd say that's more than enough to keep you, and yours, in a festive mood over the next four days.

But ladies and gentlemen, remember, the best wines are the ones we drink with friends. And there's no better place to make friends than right here, right now, at the Hong Kong Wine and Dine Festival.

Cheers and bon appétit!

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