

OVERSEAS NEWS

Seduced by red wine – Cuddly critters

VINOUS VIAGRA

“Wine,” wrote ancient Roman poet Ovid, “gives courage and makes men apt for passion.” Recent research in Italy has revealed that women are no less responsive to the fruit of the vine than men. A scientific study conducted by the University of Florence shows that women who drink red wine have more satisfying sex lives than teetotallers.

The researchers quizzed 800 Tuscan women between the ages of 18 and 50 with the aid of the Female Sexual Function Index. This is used by medical practitioners to measure women’s sexual health based on indicators such as arousal, orgasm, satisfaction and pain. Those who took part were divided into three categories – women who regularly drank one or two glasses of red wine a day, those who drank lower amounts of wine or any other alcoholic beverage than that and those who didn’t drink at all.

Daily red wine drinkers clocked up an average of 27.3 out of a maximum potential

of 36 points on the Index. Less frequent imbibers scored 25.9 points.

Non-drinkers trailed the pack with 24.4 points. An unexpected revelation of the study was that the average age of the regular red wine tipplers was higher than all others in the survey. This surprised researchers as advancing years are usually associated with declining sex drive.

The investigators have so far been unable to account for this phenomenon but the most popular theory is that the antioxidants in red wine widen the blood vessels, increasing the flow of blood. This creates a Viagra-like effect in key areas of the female body.

“While this finding needs to be interpreted with some caution,” says lead researcher Dr Nicola Mondaini, “it suggests a potential relationship between red wine consumption and better sexuality.” It sounds as though the latter day American poet and humourist Ogden Nash got it right when he quipped, “Candy is dandy but liquor is quicker.”

KOALA TO THE RESCUE

In the last two years, US imports of Australian wine have plunged 20 per cent in value and increased 21 per cent by volume. Now, Fred Franzia, CEO of Bronco Wine Company in California has come up with a new budget-buster from South Eastern Australia. He is the creator of America’s most competitively priced quaffing wine, affectionately dubbed ‘Two Buck Chuck’ for its US\$2 price tag and Charles Shaw brand name.

His first offering in his Australian portfolio is a chardonnay, Down Under by Crane Lake and the label is adorned with a koala so it is already being nicknamed ‘Three Dolla Koala’.

There is some debate in the market place as to whether the Aussie newcomer will erode the booming business enjoyed by Casella Wines’ Yellow Tail based in Riverina. But it certainly won’t erode the perception that Australia only produces cheap, sunshine-in-a-bottle wines.

ANTHONY MANIFOLD

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