

Moutai opens up window in bid to expand into African continent

State reception must-have brand begins Belt and Road promo tour in Cape Town

By PAN ZHONGMING
panzhongming@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese liquor brand Moutai is gaining popularity in Cape Town, South Africa, as China Kweichow Moutai Distillery (Group) launched a brand promotion initiative in the port city.

The move reflects Moutai Group's accelerated global strategy, pushing forward the sustained and steady development of its overseas markets.

"This is the first time the company has taken steps to enter the African market," said Li Baofang, general manager of the group. "We chose Cape Town as the gateway for Moutai to enter the African continent, as the city in South Africa holds a strategic position among countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative."

This is the first time that the Chinese giant has launched this type of market expansion activity in the continent, even though some African retailers were selling Moutai on a small scale previously.

"Cape Town is the first leg of our serial brand cultural promotions of the Belt and Road branding trip," Li said. "This is because South Africa has a sound cooperation foundation as a BRICS country and Cape Town has a long history of wine culture."

More than 6,000 years ago, the Chinese invented grain liquor, Africa invented beer and the ancient Babylonians invented wine, making these regions the three birthplaces of liquor, beer and wine culture in the world, Li said at the promotion event.

Ever since China proposed its Belt and Road Initiative, China's Moutai has taken determined steps across the world map and launched a "whirlwind" across the world, showing increasingly strong expansion momentum.

"China and Africa are like close brothers and sisters, so the distance will not keep us apart. Even in ancient times, when we lacked direct contact, we were stars shining far from each other," Li said. "As two vital and important



Li Baofang (second from right), general manager of Kweichow Moutai Group, accompanies Cape Town Vice Mayor Ian Neilson to look at a Moutai cultural exhibition. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A bartender makes a cocktail with Moutai at the liquor's promotional event in Cape Town.



Anrous Marais, head of the Western Cape department of cultural affairs and sports, gives a golden key to Moutai, a symbol of welcome and appreciation of the distiller bringing more Chinese culture.

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Marlene le Roux, CEO of Artscape

economies, we have vigorously promoted the sustained growth of the world economy."

Kang Yong, consul-general of the Chinese consulate in Cape Town, recalled many stories about Moutai on diplomatic occasions.

The company's statistics show sales in the 26 countries along the Belt and Road Initiative account for 26.53 percent of its global sales.

Among them, the African market accounts for only 1 percent, indicating great potential for growth.

"The Moutai company is so smart that now they want to use the fast track of the Belt and Road by coming

to Cape Town. They want the Capetonians to be the first to taste the wonders of Moutai, and then people from the whole of Africa, with Cape Town as the gateway to spreading Moutai all over the African continent," Kang said.

The promotion event was warmly welcomed by local officials and communities.

"Moutai's entry into the market will help people in South Africa to understand more about Chinese culture," said Marlene le Roux, CEO of Artscape, a Cape Town arts & culture center. "The entrepreneurs present today need to learn about Chinese culture and the Chinese way of life which are

closely related to Moutai."

Speaking on behalf of the mayor of Cape Town, City Councillor Suzette Little said, "Moutai brings its culture to Cape Town, and like-minded people with the same vision and same hope see an economic opportunity that crosses the borders of culture and the differences of diversity."

At the event, Zhao Shuyue, board member of Moutai Group, announced the Proposal for Africa - China Enterprises Belt and Road Common Development Alliance.

The branding initiative will also take the Moutai delegation to Namibia and Mozambique.



Company heads of Kweichow Moutai pose with representatives from the Cape Town government and the South African Rugby Association in front of the association's national rugby cup trophy.

China distillery giant proposes a toast to deepening relations

By CHEN MEILING
chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

China Kweichow Moutai Distillery (Group) is working alongside the South African Rugby Association to promote bilateral economic and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Thelo Wakefield, minister of South Africa's sports bureau, said that, as the national sport of South Africa, rugby has many fans and players among the public, so cooperation with a world-famous brand Moutai will bring significant effects.

Li Baofang, Party chief and general manager of Moutai Group, said the company expects that many more South African people will come to know Moutai through their favorite sport.

"We are looking forward to establishing collaboration with South Africa in sports events, as part of the effort to help enhance Sino-African communications," Li said.

Anrous Marais, head of the Western Cape department of cultural affairs and sports, said the past few years have seen much progress in cooperation with China, with more Chinese students studying in Africa, Chinese companies making more investments in the region, and bilateral cultural exchanges becoming more frequent.

Marais gave a golden key to Moutai, a symbol of welcome and appreciation of the distiller bringing more Chinese culture to South Africa.

At a brand promotional event held in the international conference center of Cape Town on Nov 17, Moutai cocktails attracted the attention of many local businesspeople.

Different cocktails were

"We are looking forward to establishing collaboration with South Africa in sports events..."

Li Baofang, general manager of Moutai Group

named in a symbolic manner, including Rainbow Silk Road, Golden Champagne and Love Affair with Chishui River, where Moutai is located.

Renowned as one of the world's top three distilled liquors, together with Scotch whisky and French brandy, Moutai cocktails have a unique taste, according to the company.

Commemorative bottles of either 375 or 750 milliliters were released at the event, to commemorate Moutai's visit to South Africa.

The bottles were painted with totems and images that represented the 20 golden years of China and South Africa's diplomatic relations, as well as the spirit they both shared, showing respect to nature and peace, the company said.

Li, from Moutai, said the company has sold products in 66 countries and regions. He suggested there is great potential for the group in the continent.

"Launching from South Africa, we expect to enter more African countries and continue promoting the Chinese culture worldwide," he said.

Liquor maker acts as cultural ambassador between two nations

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Ties between South Africa and China have been further strengthened with the launch on Friday of a promotion drive, the Moutai South Africa Banquet.

China's liquor giant, China Kweichow Moutai Distillery (Group), launched its Belt and Road bouquet at the Cape Town International Convention Center - an initiative widely welcomed by businesses and the local government.

Themed Meeting in Africa through the Unique Aroma - China Kweichow Moutai, The Belt and Road Branding Initiatives in South Africa, the launch aimed at cementing the relationship between the two BRICS nations.

Various spheres of government, business, culture, and distribution were invited to the event.

Among those in attendance at the launch were Vice Mayor Ian Neilson and

Yaw Pehrah, chief business officer at Wesgro, the official tourism, trade and investment promotion agency for Cape Town and the Western Cape.

The launch was also an acknowledgement of the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping as a global development initiative.

A 60-strong Kweichow Moutai Group delegation arrived in Cape Town on Nov 15 to investigate the trading environment in South Africa, find business opportunities and introduce South Africans to the Moutai brand.

The delegation participated in a wine country tour and met with potential distributors.

Chinese State-owned Kweichow Moutai Co produces Moutai - a Chinese white spirit distilled from fermented sorghum.

The product won major global honors including gold medals at the 1915 Panama-



Tukiwini Mandela, granddaughter of Nelson Mandela, congratulates Li Baofang on Moutai's arrival in South Africa. She offers a bottle of wine with the signature of her mother Makaziwe Mandela.

Pacific Exposition in San Francisco and the Paris International Exposition in 1985 and 1986, as well as 14 other international awards.

Members of the delegation

expressed their excitement at visiting the vineyards and tasting South Africa's world class wines.

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"We are visiting South Africa to secure future business and seek opportunities with local companies."

Li Baofang, Kweichow Moutai general manager

ness and seek opportunities with local companies," said Kweichow Moutai Director and General Manager Li Baofang.

Li added that the fact the company brought such a large delegation indicated its level of purpose and intent to understand the local market and find companies to work with.

The Consul General of China in Cape Town Kang Yong said Moutai is not only a liquid, and not only a material product.

"It's also something of spirit. Moutai is already exported to North America and European countries, however, very little is exported to the African continent," Kang said.

"I am confident that Moutai will gain success in this strategy," he added.

Addressing the delegation, South African Mining Development Agency Director Thabo Shogole said South Africa was a gateway into the continent.

"We have one of the best banking environments and auto industries. We would like partnerships that are mutually beneficial to everyone," Shogole said.

He said that one perception was that China wanted to "colonize" Africa, while Africa was colonized before, which should not be the way people looked to China.

"Moutai will disprove those myths as there will be mutually beneficial relationships between Africa, South Africa and China," he said.

"A brand of this magnitude will benefit the people of South Africa."

Shogole welcomed the initiative, saying it will strengthen the already existing relations between South Africa and China.

Speaking on the sidelines of the launch, Wesgro's Yaw Pehrah said, "As an agency, our mandate is to promote tourism and trade, and to bring exports and investment into the Western Cape."

He said Moutai was one of the biggest companies in China, with a great brand.

"If their aim is to come and set up a distribution here, or even if it's a manufacturing spread out into the rest of the continent or the rest of the region, we welcome it," he added.

"It seems like a good company."