



French coopers honours California



The French Coopers' Association (Fédération des Tonneliers de France) recently held its annual meeting in Napa Valley, California. It was the first time they gathered outside France. That the meeting took place in Napa is not a coincidence.

It was the Californian wine industry that gave new life to the French cooperage (barrel making) industry in the 1970s. That's the time when the fashion of ageing wines in new oak barrels started. A fashion that soon spread like wildfire all over the world.

Today, the United States is the largest importer of French oak barrels. The US buys around 200,000 barrels annually from France, which is about one third of the total French production of just over 600,000 barrels. Almost 70% of French oak barrels are exported.

Other major exporting countries are Spain, Australia and Italy. The barrels are made in many different sizes: Bordeaux barriques of 225 litres, Burgundy pièces of 228 litres and the larger tonneaux, demi-muids, cuves and foudres. In France, there are about 60 coopers (barrel makers).

Read more: tonneliersdefrance.com.

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