

VISUAL CODES ON FRENCH WINE LABELS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL MARKETING IN CHINA AND AUSTRALIA

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Abstract

This paper examines visual codes on French wine labels that rely on the cognitive connections between the source and the target that are usually accessible only to culturally specific market segments. These strategies therefore draw on cross-cultural marketing in particularly innovative ways, demonstrating a complicity or cross-cultural understanding inherent in the symbolic content of their visual codes.

Two examples of French wine labels have been selected to display these cross-cultural strategies in different price brackets (premium and low-cost) and contexts (Asian and Western): Château Lafite in China and Arrogant Frog in Australia. Focusing on these wine labels, this paper analyses the visual elements with symbolic content that trigger positive responses in these culturally differentiated segments of the market: China and Australia.

This research establishes a framework for analysing strategies used by French wine producers in targeting culturally specific market segments.

Introduction

Cross-cultural marketing has been applied to wine for centuries, ranging from Bordeaux's production of New French Clarets for English consumers, to the Veuve Clicquot's syrupy champagnes for Russian palates. In recent times, there is less manipulation of the product to correspond to culturally specific taste trends (the Parkerization of red wines is a worldwide phenomenon), and more emphasis placed on visual labelling to appeal to culturally specific market segments (Hall et al., 1994; 1996; 1997; Charters et al., 2011).

This paper examines visual codes on French wine labels that rely on the cognitive connections between the source and the target that are usually accessible only to culturally specific market segments. These strategies therefore draw on cross-cultural marketing in particularly innovative ways, demonstrating a complicity or cross-cultural understanding inherent in the symbolic content of their visual codes.

Two examples of French wine labels have been selected to display these cross-cultural strategies in different price brackets (premium and low-cost) and contexts (Asian and Western): Château Lafite in China and Arrogant Frog in Australia. Focusing on these wine labels, this paper analyses the visual elements with symbolic content that trigger positive responses in these culturally differentiated segments of the market.

In 2010, Château Lafite announced that their 2008 vintage would feature the Chinese figure 8 symbol in red (八) embossed into their glass bottles and magnums just above the front label. This innovation marks a pivotal moment in Bordeaux first growth wine marketing, signifying a shift in the hierarchy of producer and consumer. Whereas normally the consumer, in this case Chinese, is expected to decipher the cultural codes of French wine labelling, Château Lafite's 2008 visual labelling attempts to cater to Chinese cues for value and status.

In 2005, Jean-Claude Mas of Les Domaines Paul Mas (DPM) in the Languedoc region launched Arrogant Frog label for export. Its success in Australia is second to none. Although it has also been embraced in the Netherlands, Canada and now Italy, its immediate uptake in Australia has been credited to its self-deprecating and simplistic humour, and low price point, in line with the previous success of Yellow Tail, an Australian budget wine with 'critter' label.

These two wine labels are analysed to determine the visual codes used and interpret the cultural cues for cross-cultural marketing.

Literature review and problem studied: Identifying Visual Codes and Interpreting Cultural Cues on Wine Labels

Wine label design is a field of growing interest in the wine market, given its role as a crucial component of the decision-making process. Drawing from previous studies investigating a label's layout, colours, and use of visual imagery, Sherman and Tuten (2011: 223) assert that 'these aspects of design lead to a gestalt view of the wine offering, the overall perception of the wine.' There are three genres of label design identified by Sherman and Tuten (2011: 223) as traditional (conservative label), contemporary (label as art), and novelty (label as fun). For them, the label's design is one of the quality indicators made of 'extrinsic cues' about the product, and of 'intrinsic cues' (such as region, grape varietal, name of the producer, etc.). A label's visual identity is therefore composed of a series of elements (i.e. colours, typography layout, illustrations), all of which contribute to reinforce a product's brand identity (Boudreaux & Palmer, 2007). These visual codes can be 'categorical', and as such are linked to the notion of perceived typicality of a product (Celhay, Folcher & Cohen, 2013: 3). As shown in recent studies (Bobrie, 2009; Bonescu et al., 2013, Celhay, Folcher & Cohen, 2013; König & Lick, 2014), semiotics provides wine label analysis with a relevant framework to investigate significance and meaning given by the potential consumer.

The binary model of signs of Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) (i.e. signifiers vs. signified, or semiotics) has been specifically applied in an initial study of the visual codes of Bordeaux wines (Celhay, Folcher & Cohen, 2013; Celhay & Remaud, 2016), then extended into a comparative study with Barossa Valley wines (Celhay et al., 2016). In these studies, the package design is investigated as 'a combination of several signifiers that communicate specific signified (i.e. meanings) to the consumer (Celhay & Remaud, 2016: 384). The framework for analysing Bordeaux Grand Crus in Celhay, Folcher & Cohen (2013) will be adapted to analyse the three cross-cultural marketing strategies in the research methodology and findings of this paper. In this way, it will be possible to understand the relationship between visual codes and association of ideas, and the reason why this relationship can be made or not, which is the key aim of this paper.

In addition to identifying visual codes on these French wine labels, it is also necessary to interpret these cultural cues. As stated above, the use of visual labelling is a key strategy for branding wine, with image having the most impact, especially when charged with symbolic content (Jarvis, Mueller & Chiong, 2010; Boudreaux & Palmer, 2007). This symbolic content can be defined and subsequently analysed as verbo-pictorial metaphors (Alousque et al., 2014; 2015; Forceville 2006; Caballero 2009). Typical examples of such verbo-pictorial metaphors are images of châteaux on French (and pseudo-French) wine labels, and pictures of 'critters' like the wallaby on Yellow Tail's label (Walker, 2006; Lehrer 2009). In line with Cognitive Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), these verbo-pictorial metaphors are conceptual metaphors based on the mapping of features in the source domain (e.g. an animal, or a person) onto the target domain (here, wine).

Research objectives and / or hypothesis:

This paper examines the strategies of visual codes (or verbo-pictorial metaphors) on French wine labels for targeting culturally specific market segments in two cross-cultural examples: Château Lafite in China and Arrogant Frog in Australia. Each of these strategies has clearly been successful in terms of sales and/or price points.

Research methodology

This paper firstly provides background and context for each of the wineries to establish their position in the global wine market. It then focuses on the particular wine labels selected, analysing the visual codes with symbolic content that trigger responses and cues in culturally differentiated segments of the market. The semiotic framework proposed by Celhay, Folcher & Cohen (2013) is the starting point for analysis of the labels. Primary resources are also used including: press releases; marketing strategies; as well as information garnered from the marketing and PR teams of Château Lafite Rothschild and Arrogant Frog. This documentation is analysed to ascertain the implicit messages encoded in visual labelling.

Results / findings

Background, analysis of visual codes and cultural cues, and discussion of market impact are presented for the two examples.

Château-Lafite Rothschild 2008

Background

Owned by Domaines Barons de Rothschild (DBR), Château Lafite-Rothschild is one of the Bordeaux First Growths (Grands Crus), among the world's most expensive and famous wines. In 1855, an official classification was requested by Napoleon III in order to rank wines according to their quality and their selling price. Mainly located in the Left Bank Médoc region, the five First Growths include Château Lafite-Rothschild (Pauillac), Château Latour (Pauillac), Château Margaux (Margaux), Château Mouton Rothschild (Pauillac) and closer to the city of Bordeaux, Château Haut-Brion (Pessac Leognan).

Bordeaux wines generally ground their brand identity in the recognisable high-shouldered bottle, and in typical labels depicting engraved pictures of the château. As part of brand's identity, seals embossed in the glass shoulders were also in common use from the 17th century to the 1870s, used by Bordeaux producers exporting their wines to England. Estate bottling, as well as authentication information included in the seal (such as the château's name and date) were seen as an efficient response to piracy and potential counterfeiting. This tradition tended to disappear in the 19th century, at least for legal purposes. However, one of the earliest major Bordeaux estates to bottle their own wine, Château Lafite-Rothschild maintained it by embossing artwork for special occasions. This was the case in 1811, 1985 and 1999 with bottles featuring Halley's Comet.

Visual codes

The visual codes on the Château Lafite Rothschild 2008 wine label and embossment are categorized below to show the meaning of each of the elements. As this wine is one of the Bordeaux Grands Crus, the table and results closely resemble the one used by Celhay, Folcher & Cohen in 'The Bordeaux Grands Crus visual codes' (2013). The signifiers and signified on the label itself are clearly not culturally specific to a Chinese buyer. These codes are determined by French wine culture and are marketed in the same way in France and around the world. However, the signifiers and signified relating to the

embossment are highly specific to Chinese culture and may only be recognized by those who have an understanding of Chinese culture.

Insert Figure 1.

Table 1. Signifiers and signified components in Château Lafite Rothschild 2008 labelling.

LABEL		
	Signifiers	Signified
Layout and composition	Centred layout Composition structured among horizontal lines Brand in the full middle of the label	Seriousness, classicism, tradition Seriousness, classicism, tradition Prestige, notoriety, and expertise
Colours	Pristine white Yellowing white/ pale yellow Red	High quality product Tradition, seniority Red wine
Brand typography	Capital letters Serifed letters with stroke variation Thin letters	Prestige, notoriety Tradition Delicate and subtle taste
Illustration theme	Château	Tradition, seniority, history, social distinction
Illustration style	One colour etching	Tradition, seniority, craft work
EMBOSSMENT		
	Signifiers	Signified (Chinese)
Composition	八	Number eight in Chinese Last digit of 2008 Auspicious meaning
Layout	In the middle of shoulders	Classicism
Colour	Red	Red wine Chinese symbol of happiness

Adapted from Celhay, Folcher & Cohen, *The Bordeaux Grands Crus visual codes* (2013)

Choosing to emboss a red Chinese figure on bottles for Château Lafite-Rothschild 2008 vintage is more than an artistic gesture. It implies knowing the explicit and implicit signification of the figure itself (八). Those who know that this figure represents the number 8 in Chinese also understand that it has not only been used as a reference to the 2008 vintage, but first and foremost because of its auspicious dimension in Chinese culture. As outlined in some posts included in the Wine Cellar Insider, DBR did an ‘amazing marketing job’ since ‘placing the Chinese figure for the number 8 on each bottle serves as a public reinforcement of where the Château’s priorities lie.’

Indeed, the owners of DBR have an international strategy to expand their holdings, not only in France with the purchase in Pomerol of Château l’Evangile from the Ducasse family, who owned the property for almost 100 years, but also abroad. DBR was one of the first Bordeaux

properties to invest in Chile, and they announced in 2008 a partnership with the CITIC (China International Trust and Investment Corporation), a Chinese Government sponsored company. According to Sam Gleave, the sales director at Bordeaux Index (cited on Decanter's website) 'Château Lafite's expansion into China is a natural progression of their brand. China will become a significant producer of fine wine in the not too distant future and Lafite are showing they are willing to take risks and enter a new market.' DBR intends to produce a Chinese 'grand cru' from 25 hectares of vines planted to Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah located in the Penglai Peninsula in the Shandong Province. As China is expected to become one of the world's biggest wine producers over the next 50 years, Château-Lafite Rothschild is among the European wine estates 'keen to get a foothold in the latest new-world wine trend.' (The Guardian).

Cultural cues

From the late 1980s, a large body of research published in English has been developed around the influence of Chinese beliefs and cultural values. Recent papers focusing on the influence of Chinese beliefs related to numbers and colours (e.g. Kramer & Block, 2008; Kommonen, 2011) generally draw on research conducted over the past three decades, such as O. Yau's work on dimensions of cultural values and their marketing implications (1988).

In regards to numbers, E. Lip highlights intricate relationship between numbers and ancient Chinese texts, theories and concepts such as the *Yi Jing* (Book of Changes) and the *Wu Xing* (Five Elements) theory based on the principles of *yin* and *yang* (i.e. feminine and masculine qualities). In the *Yi Jing* (Classic of Changes), an ancient divination text considered the oldest of the Chinese classics, even numbers are *yin* and odd numbers are *yang*. This book served as the basis of predictions and prophecies for centuries, and is grounded in the concepts of *yin* and *yang* at the core of the Taoist cosmology and numerology.

In the Classic of Changes, the number 8 is associated with the Wood Element and the East direction. The eight directions (*bafang*)--North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West, and Northwest-- represent the whole universe, and are used as a fortune-telling method to interpret someone's fortune according to the trigram of one's date of birth. Symbolism of the number 8 is also related to the legendary *Ba xian* (Eight Immortals) characters in classical literature who successfully practice meditation to achieve immortality. Throughout centuries, auspiciousness of this number was reinforced by the fact that *ba* (*eight*) is pronounced in some dialects as *fa* (for *facai*, 'to get rich') or *fu* ('lucky') (Lip, 1992).

Cantonese culture, in particular, is believed to have first associated 8 with money, but evaluative connotation of 8 with wealth can also be explained by its phonetical similarity with *bai* (hundred). In regards to its shape, the resemblance of 8 with the mathematical symbol of infinity and its perfect symmetry can be perceived as illustrating perfect balance, an ideal in Chinese astrology. In addition, the double digit 88 is often seen as matching the popular decorative design made of a double *xi* ('happiness') typically used at weddings

Meaning of the number 8 for individuals who have a Chinese background has therefore been increasingly scrutinised in marketing. Drawing on a Lip's study, Hoon Ang (1997) provides an analysis of alpha-numeric brand names based on connotations of letters and numbers in a non-Western environment. Several illustrations of positive beliefs associated to the number 8 are given by Hoon Ang who, nine years before the Olympic Games, highlighted the choice of opening the bank of China in Hong Kong on the 8th of August in 1988 because this time was considered the luckiest day in the century. In a similar perspective, Simmons and Schindler

(2002) have explored the evaluative connotation of the digit 8 in their research on cultural superstitions and the price endings used in Chinese advertising. They particularly investigated the psychological effect of common practice to use 8 for price points (instead of 9 in Western countries). Findings of these two studies are concordant and confirm that the number 8 is immediately associated by Chinese people with good luck and prosperity.

In addition to numbers, specific meanings and aesthetic appeal for colours have been explored as crucial components of managing corporate and brand identities in the Asia-Pacific region. As outlined by Schmitt and Pan (1994: 43), red has been ‘appreciated for centuries as the most appealing –and most lucky—color in contrast with blue, a ‘cold color [that] carries associations of being evil and sinister.’ Auspicious meaning ascribed to colours derives from the Five Elements (*Wu Xing*), a fundamental doctrine of ancient China that provides a systematic approach to develop harmonious relations and interactions of heaven, earth and human (Lee, 2012). In this theory, correlations have been developed between the five substances (water, wood, fire, earth and metal) and directions, colours, climate, sounds, body parts, animals, etc. (Kommonen, 2011; Lee, 2012). The colour red is thus associated with fire, south, heat, joy, laughing (Lee, 2012: 157).

Expressing ‘the vibrant energy of life and happiness’, this colour is particularly appropriate for occasions such as Chinese New Year, weddings and childbirth (ibid: 163). It is also reported by Kommonen’s informants to be useful for warding off evils, as illustrated by the red-coated walls in the Forbidden City, or by red items sold during Spring Festival. Moreover, red shoes, garments, or belts are said to be commonly worn by people who want to protect themselves during their ‘bad luck year’, i.e. the year of their animal sign in Chinese Zodiac (Kommonen, 2011: 371).

In conclusion, as a summary of previous studies, the survey done by Kramer and Block (2008) on the superstitious beliefs and their impact in judgment and decision making confirmed that individuals with a Chinese background associated the most positive beliefs with the number 8 and the colour red.

Arrogant Frog 2005

Background

Arrogant Frog is a low-cost label of the ever-growing wine stable Domaines Paul Mas (DPM). Led by Jean-Claude Mas (son of Paul), whose family has been making wines in the Languedoc region since 1892, DPM currently owns 12 wineries totalling 720 hectares, with another 1400 hectares under contract, making them the biggest grape buyers in the region. They employ 190 staff, produce 140 wines, sold in 61 countries, with sales figures around 55 million euros, up 7% in 2017. Ninety per cent of their product is exported. Château Paul Mas is the historic heart of the properties, developed for oenotourism with a round tasting room and bar, horse-riding, quad bikes, and a luxury restaurant, bistrot/wine bar and accommodation. This is what Mas calls ‘le luxe rural’ (rural luxury), which is part and parcel of the region’s new branding alongside *Decanter’s* ‘The New Languedoc’ (Lawther 2016) and *Le Monde’s* ‘Le Nouveau Languedoc’ (Guerrin 2018). All of these expressions have been created to relaunch the world’s largest wine-producing region (in volume) that has long been considered a poor cousin of the better-known and higher-priced Bordeaux, Burgundy, Châteauneuf du Pape, or even Côtes du Rhône.

Mas was well ahead of the curve when he began selling ‘unsellable’ Languedoc wines through his negotiant business in 2000. His pedigree in racing cars, wine sales with Bordeaux’s business guru

Bernard Magrez, oenology with Italian winemaker Giorgio Grai, combined with an MBA in marketing, and natural flair for advertising and design, brought star quality to the stagnant, peasant image of the Languedoc. Despite improving wine quality, Languedoc could not compete in the French market, which pushed Mas to explore international markets where consumers would buy a 5 euro wine from the Languedoc if it was better than its competitors – Yellow Tail from Australia or Frontera from Chile, for example (Guerrin 2018). This is how the Arrogant Frog label was born.

Visual codes

The visual codes on the original Arrogant Frog wine label launched in 2005 are categorized below to show the meaning of each of the elements. The signifiers and signified on the label itself are clearly not culturally specific to an Australian buyer, but they are aligned with the kind of ‘critter’ labels that Australian consumers have been used to seeing on Yellow Tail and other Australian wine labels. The visual codes here do not reflect traditional French or ‘Old World’ wine culture; they resemble ‘New World’ wine labels. Although Arrogant Frog is marketed in the same way in France and around the world, and despite the fact that the signifiers and signified components on the label are not specific to Australian culture, there are nonetheless cultural cues which appeal to Australian consumers.

Insert Figure 2.

Table 2. Signifiers and signified components in Arrogant Frog 2005 labelling.

LABEL		
	Signifiers	Signified
Layout and composition	Centred layout Composition structured to foreground illustration Brand centred in bottom third of the label Region at top of label	Tradition Fun, fresh, artistic, unorthodox ‘Arrogant’ biggest ‘Ribet Red’ brightest Generic – ‘South of France’
Colours	Cream background Yellow and green Bright red	Quality product Unorthodox Radical
Brand typography	Upper- and lower-case letters Irregular Font and colour variation Brackets	Uneven, irreverent ‘Arrogant’ biggest case and irregular letter size ‘Ribet Red’ brightest and alliterated joke Square brackets around ‘Limited Edition’
Illustration theme	Comical anthropomorphic French frog with beret and wine glass	Critter = budget wine, reasonable quality Original, fun, fresh, stylish, French, stereotypical, insouciant, mocking
Illustration style	Line-drawing with colour	Artistic, aesthetic, humorous

The name and image of the wine reinforces national stereotypes propounded especially by Anglo cultures: that the French are arrogant and snobbish, especially when it comes to wine. However, the overwhelming impression offered by the Arrogant Frog label is irreverent fun, not taking anything too

seriously, self-deprecating, and simple. This image coincides with the national stereotype of the laconic and larrikin Australian, typified by 'no worries mate'. It also undercuts any kind of aggression or malice that could be interpreted by referring to the frog/French as arrogant.

James Halliday credits the wine's success in Australia to the label's particular appeal for Australian consumers: 'Australians are thoroughly accustomed to black, self-deprecating humour, and Jean-Claude has taken it to another level. The labels of Arrogant Frog are descendants of Ronald Searle, the artist/cartoonist who contributed much to the wine world in bygone decades. I love them, and think they are in a class apart from other little critter labels.' (Halliday 2009) He also praises Mas's extraordinary marketing skills and ability to capitalize on a market share where others have failed, including Hardys attempt with La Baume and Southcorp with La Pouse.

Australian newspaper and website reviews of Arrogant Frog have commended Mas's astute borrowing of the critter label, inspired by Casella's success with Yellow Tail's label in the export market (Speedy 2011). Respected wine writers Jeni Port and Huon Hooke note that Mas is 'every Australian winemakers' nightmare' (Port 2007) and find it hard to think of anyone who might beat him at this game (Hooke 2011). The high praise is deserved though, as Mas not only dreamed up the product and the marketing pitch, but drew the frog himself, renewed the amphibian's wardrobe with various sporting and festive avatars and spends over 100 days per year promoting his exports outside France.

Cultural cues

For many Australian consumers, the overt ridiculing of anything snobbish is appealing, especially if it is a hedonic product (like wine) offered at a budget price point. Australian products that undermine French 'snobbish' culture include Paris Creek washed rind cheese called 'Com'n'bear' with a label showing a polar bear. At first glance, Australians might imagine that Arrogant Frog wines are marketed by Australians, or even Australian wines. This particular stance coincides with the Australian larrikin stereotype, defined as possessing or admiring the following traits: 'larger than life, sceptical, iconoclastic, egalitarian, yet suffering fools badly, insouciant, and above all, defiant' (Gorman 1990: ix-x). The enjoyable irony of a French winemaker who markets his wines with the image of a frog which is essentially the French version of an Australian larrikin seems ultimately irresistible.

There is another cultural cue that attracts Australian consumers to Arrogant Frog wines – the critter label. Recalling experiences of the Australian Yellow Tail brand, launched in 2001, and made by another family business, the Casella Family Brands, the critter label symbolizes budget priced wine of reasonable or reliable quality. In 2009, the Casella Family Brands was the most powerful family-owned wine brand in Australia, and the fourth most powerful in the world (Dufour & Steane 2010). However, the financial crisis of 2008 and increasing competition from Chilean wines in the US market saw Yellow Tail's market share decline. In 2014, the Casella Family Brands announced their intention to focus on premium wine categories, purchasing Peter Lehmann in the Barossa Valley and Brand's Laira in the Coonawarra, as well as Morris Wines in Victoria and substantial vineyards in McLaren Vale. Interestingly, Domaines Paul Mas are also moving further towards premium wine categories, with a major rebranding strategy launched in 2015.

Practical managerial implications and recommendations

The implications of these cross-cultural marketing strategies for sales and/or price points are significant in both premium and low-cost markets and in both Asian and Western contexts. There are clear differences between the DBR strategy of a single gesture for long-term relationship with Chinese premium consumers and the DPM strategy of permanent positioning for long-term relationship with Australian low-cost consumers. Details of the market impact of these two strategies are outlined below.

Market impact for Château Lafite 2008

While the 2008 vintage was initially offered at \$200 per bottle, the price rose by 20% overnight in October 2010 after it was announced that bottles would be marked with the Chinese symbol for the number 8. On the Decanter website, it was reported that following this news, UK merchants declared that they were selling out of the wine, and on Tuesday morning, the price of a case of Château Lafite Rothschild 2008 was trading at £8,500 on trading platform Liv-ex. The following day, it had risen to £10,160, and a peak was reached in January 2011 at £14,043 a case. Websites in French and in English all recognise that from 2008, Lafite Rothschild became the most collectible wine from Bordeaux due to an extraordinary demand from China. According to the Wine Cellar Insider website, product placement on the number one rated Chinese soap opera on television was one of the brand promotion strategies used by Lafite to transform wine in a product symbol of wealth and social status. An intense speculation occurred due to the increasing demand among Chinese millionaire wine collectors and corporates. This phenomenon was described in the website of la Revue des Vins de France as ‘a cult for the brand’ developed in China that explained how the less prestigious of the First Growths became in a single decade ‘the most speculative Bordeaux wine.’ Consequently, inflated prices were reported to be detrimental to European customers and true connoisseurs, some bloggers even mentioning that the wine was clearly not purchased for the purpose of consumption, but foremost for power and social status.

However, in 2011, the Bordeaux wine market in China started to decline. Prices for Bordeaux wines listed as 100 top-traded in **Liv-ex dropped** by an average 22.5% between June and December. According to the Decanter website, the greatest loser was **Château Lafite 2008**, with a fall of some 45%. This loss of interest by the largest buyers in China was explained by a growing attention given to Burgundy, where smaller amounts of wine being produced in this region were assumed to trigger higher trading profits. By 2013, prices started to stabilise around \$650 for a bottle of 2008 Lafite. In May 2017, a quick search on the internet reveals that one bottle can be purchased at €950 in France (from the WineandCo website) and at \$1499.99 in Australia (from the Dan Murphy website).

While speculation had an obvious impact on the level of price, our hypothesis is that using the double auspicious symbol of a red eight on 2008 bottles was not a mere strategy from Château Lafite Rothschild to attract Chinese wealthy consumers. It can be also seen as a ‘wink’ to their joint-venture with a Chinese corporation, announced the same year. Since the vineyards in China cannot be owned by the producers, DBR entered into a partnership with CITIC, Chinese International Trust and Investment Corporation in order to produce premium red wine. The first information on this investment to be released in the news section of the official DBR website (<http://www.lafite.com/en/the-lafite-spirit/news/>) included the following comment from Baron Eric de Rothschild: ‘I am very pleased to develop a vineyard in a country where the interest in fine wines is increasing every year. It is particularly exciting to participate in the creation of an exceptional Chinese wine’. According to the latest harvest report published in 2016, significant improvements have been made in terms of physiological balance, increased yield and the quality level, and strategic choices are said to be ‘bearing their fruit’. This echoes Gerard Colin’s position. In an interview published in 2012, the first Director of the DBR-Citic estate reported that the priority of DBR (Lafite) in China, like in France, remained a quest for excellence, and that this long-term project required time and patience.

In order to allow Chinese wine consumers and lovers to follow the journey of DBR-Citic, a microblog titled *The Voyage of DBR (Lafite)* was officially launched in May 2012 on Weibo, the equivalent of Facebook in China. The press release mentioned that DBR chose this very

popular media to present the spirit of the group, and its culture and history in a more direct, interactive style of communication. When the first commercial vintage is released, it will be of interest to see whether communications in China and France make a link between the quality of this wine and the double auspicious symbols used on 2008 bottles.

Market impact for Arrogant Frog

Arrogant Frog wines sell for between AU\$8 and \$12 in Australia's largest and most successful liquor retail chain, Dan Murphy's, owned by Woolworths, which also stock Arrogant Frog in their BWS retail chain. This group has almost 50% of the total dollar market share according to the 2016 Alcohol Retail Currency report by Roy Morgan Research. Signing up for exclusive distribution through the Woolworths group in 2005, Mas was able to launch his Arrogant Frog label in Australia without fear of excessive price wars, or devaluation. The first year was difficult, but sales rose by 450% in 2006 to more than 100,000 cases and Arrogant Frog sales are now around 1 million bottles per year, placing Australia in second place globally, after the Netherlands, taking one fifth of the 5 million bottles exported worldwide.

Attempts to introduce DPM premium brands into the Australian wine market have proved unsuccessful, though the other budget labels like Côté Mas are also selling well. The rebranding of Arrogant Frog wines in 2015 indicates an intention to privilege traditional notions of terroir and provenance, rather than industrial or commercial wines, even though the DPM export business is built on Mas's exceptional marketing of these wines. The addition of a paler background picture of a vineyard and old winery behind the frog gives him a sense of place, and the black embossed band under the image reads 'Jean-Claude MAS, Vignerons de Père en Filles, Depuis 1892'. Mas stated: 'We wanted to create a label that illustrates the wine's heritage, one that would tell the story of the vineyard behind the iconic frog. The new label emphasises the wine's deep connection to its terroir and region, showcasing both the brand's playful attitude and strong ties to tradition.' (Retail World Magazine 2016) He has certainly transformed the label, but the most prominent elements of the frog and the word 'Arrogant' maintain its playful and irreverent tone, and therefore its appeal to Australian consumers.

Conclusions

These two examples of cross-cultural marketing are successful for the same fundamental reason that they demonstrate a complicity or cross-cultural understanding inherent in the symbolic content of their visual codes. However, each case is different because the symbolic content that triggers positive responses in these culturally differentiated segments of the market – China and Australia – is completely different. In China, the visual codes of Château Lafite Rothschild 2008 combine classic luxury, tradition and prestige with auspicious meanings and happiness. In Australia, the visual codes of Arrogant Frog offer larrikin humour and accessibility based on 'critter' recognition and national stereotyping. Despite the differences in market position (premium and low-cost) and context (Asian and Western), the implications of these cross-cultural marketing strategies for sales and/or price points are significant.

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Figure 1



Figure 2