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## New Japanese Ambassador to Australia encourages SA to export more of its wine to the country

Japan's top diplomat, on his first visit to Adelaide, has urged SA winemakers to expand into his country to counter the loss from the Chinese market.

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There are more than 30 million Japanese wine drinkers waiting to be introduced to quality South Australian wine, Japan's top diplomat in Australia says.

In a wide-ranging interview, new ambassador to Australia Shingo Yamagami urged SA wine makers to diversify their exports, declaring he wanted Japanese to be able to enjoy everything from Penfolds to Fruity Lexia.

He made the plea while also revealing senior Japanese officials were still hurt after losing out on the Future Submarines contract five years ago.

Mr Yamagami said there was "growing demand" in Japan for SA wine, as the local industry reeled from China's unrelenting trade tariffs.

"That kind of high-quality wine is yet to reach the Japanese market," he said.

Mr Yamagami said Australia was "lagging behind" other nations, such as Italy and France, when it came to exporting wine to Japan.

"This is high time for (South Australia) to diversify export destinations," he said.

“Japanese people drink wine like whales; consumption is enormous.”

On his first visit to SA since becoming Ambassador in December 2020, Mr Yamagami gave a talk at the University of Adelaide on Monday.



Japanese Ambassador to Australia Shingo Yamagami at Adelaide University. Picture: Tom Huntley

“There are over 30 million regular wine drinkers in Japan just waiting for someone to introduce them to the delights of a good Barossa Valley shiraz,” he said.

“As much as I love being able to have a nice glass of Jacob’s Creek in Tokyo, what I’d really like is to be able to enjoy the full range of SA wines; from a fancy Penfolds to a Berri Estates Fruity Lexia.”

Mr Yamagami is due to tomorrow meet with Premier Steven Marshall, with whom he is expected to discuss wine exports, the state’s hydrogen plans and future space co-operation. “SA was quite fast in coming up with a (hydrogen) strategy and they are ahead in the game,” he said.

“In particular, Japan is excited about SA’s endeavour to create the largest green ammonia plant in the world (on the Eyre Peninsula).”

He also declared “the sky is the limit” with Japanese-SA space co-operation, pointing to last year’s landing of the Hayabusa2 at Woomera as one example.

Meanwhile, Mr Yamagami told The Advertiser there still remained a “great deal of disappointment” among senior Japanese government officials after losing the bidding process for the Future Submarines contract to French company DCNS (now Naval Group) in 2016.



A joint Australian/Japanese naval exercise in 2016, the same year Japan missed out on the contract to build the Future Submarines.

“Never in the history of Japan did we enter into the bidding for any foreign country,” he said.

“But, because we were urged by the Australian government, we reluctantly decided to enter.

“We thought this was going to be Japanese submarines (built in SA).

“That is something we should never repeat in our bilateral relationship, there is a great deal of disappointment on the part of the Japanese.

“While I am always astonished by the beauty and tranquillity of the Australian ocean, I can’t help but think it would have been even more beautiful and quiet with South Australian manufactured, Japanese submarines in it.”

Mr Yamagami, however, left the door open to Japanese companies manufacturing other defence equipment in SA in the future.

“It will be possible, but we failed once, we cannot have a second failure,” he said.