

BATHING IN BEAUJOLAIS? WHY NOT?



Hark, all you wine lovers! The Japanese hot spring spa resort, **Hakone Kowakien Yunessun** located at the foot of Mt. Fuji, offers a unique opportunity to bathe in ... yes, Beaujolais!

The third Thursday in November is the beginning of the new season of Beaujolais and visitors of this spa have celebrated the day by bathing in this wine. Mika Okitsu of the spa resort has said they wanted to provide their customers with a unique experience. Despite the cold weather the spa guests enjoyed the bath immensely.

It is not only a unique service for the spa's customers but it is also a bid to boost the dropping sales of Beaujolais. The wine is losing its consumers, especially in Japan and the U.S., the biggest importers of Beaujolais. The sales have dropped by 21 per cent in 2007. In Japan itself, the fall was 28 per cent. In 2004, Japanese bought 12.5 million bottles of Beaujolais but in 2007, the consumption fell to 8.26 million. The fall is likely to continue partially because of the global economic downturn. Another reason for the drop is of course the high price of this wine.

Only the time will show whether such attractions as wine spa will help the popular French wine producers to increase the profits. For sure however this will add to the popularity of Yunessun resort. The spa also offers a number of other services apart from the wine bath. The facility combines traditional Japanese spas with water leisure services and activities. Guests may enjoy spas styled in the ancient Roman period or spa designed as an Ottoman Turkish Palace. If the visitors do not prefer bathing in wine they may try bathing in Sake, Green Tea or even Coffee instead.

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