

Wine Wisdom

Celebrity Chefs Call For Consumer Protection

(NAPSA)—Consumers count on truth in labeling to make an informed decision on which wine to purchase.

That's why celebrity chefs, including the renowned José Andrés and Michel Richard, have joined consumer advocates and a wide group of food and wine experts to support authentic labels for wines in the United States.

They are calling for the end of a legal loophole that allows some U.S. wines to masquerade as something they are not.

In an open letter to Congress, these chefs, alongside consumer protection organizations, top wine schools, and sommeliers, ask Congress to “reform the system which regulates wine labels to ensure that all wine-growing regions are protected on U.S. wine labels.”

Great wine has everything to do with location. Climate, soil and terrain all ensure that specific regions produce unique wines. Winemakers in the U.S. and around the world rely on these place names to market their wines and consumers know to look on the label to learn where their wine comes from.

In the same way that Napa Valley wine comes from Napa Valley, champagne comes from Champagne and consumers look to these—and many other—famous names when choosing their wines.

But the U.S. is one of the only countries in the developed world that allows wines to originate in a different region than what's on the label. A loophole in U.S. laws



Experts say deceptive wine labels should be banned before more consumers are misled about the products they purchase.

allows port, sherry, champagne and 14 other world-famous names to be used on wines not coming from these specific regions. While some may claim that the EU-US Wine Accords signed in 2006 solved this problem, U.S. law allows thousands of wines to continue using misleading labels.

For consumers, one of the worst examples of these problems is the misuse of the term “champagne” on U.S. wines. Despite the 2006 agreement, over 50 percent of the sparkling wine sold is mislabeled “champagne.”

This campaign is timely, as the U.S. is projected to become the largest wine market in the world by 2015. As consumers become educated about wine, nearly 15,000 have signed up to the Petition to Protect Wine Place and Origin.

For more information, visit <http://petition.champagne.us/>.