
French wine baron snaps up vineyard in Japan

By Editor

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PARIS, March 27, 2008 (AFP) - A top French wine baron said Thursday he had acquired a vineyard on the slopes of Mount Fuji in Japan, becoming the first French wine player to set up shop in the country.

'I have just bought a little six-hectare domain, to produce a high-end white wine,' in association with a Japanese winegrower, said Bernard Magrez, former head of the wine and spirits group William Pitters.

Magrez, who owns 35 vineyards on four continents -- including five in partnership with French actor Gerard Depardieu -- did not reveal the value of the deal but said he hoped it would help boost his sales in Japan.

Present in Spain, Portugal, Morocco, the United States, Chile, Argentina and South Africa, but also in France's Languedoc-Roussillon and Bordeaux regions, his group has an annual turnover of around 40 million euros (63 million dollars) per year.

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