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SUCCESS STORY

Building a World-Class Wine Brand

USAID assists Moldovan winery to launch new wine brand in UK



Acorex marketing staff present their new brand, "Taking Root," in Germany at the ProWein Trade Show.

Acorex's "Taking Root" brand is only the second modern wine brand developed by a Moldovan winery. Acorex's experience shows that Moldovan wine companies can compete in the global wine business.

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Few Moldovan wineries have understood or developed world-class wine brands that would appeal to Western consumers, and in the past they did not need to. Most Moldovan wine was purchased by Russian traders who did not require modern branding techniques. In fact, many Moldovan wine producers frequently changed their labels, with no thought to developing a loyal consumer base. The long-established wine trading system with Russia — a legacy of central planning — ensured that Moldovan companies always had a market for their wine. But in early 2006, wine trading relations with Russia changed abruptly, leaving Moldovan companies scrambling for new markets, including Western markets where modern wine branding is essential for developing sustainable business relationships.

One Moldovan winery, Acorex Wineholding, was quick to understand this and undertook the ambitious task of developing a wine brand that could compete in the UK with wines from around the world. But Acorex needed help. With assistance from USAID, Acorex was able to secure the services of a specialty wine brand design firm, Amphora Designs, which, together with Acorex's management and a UK wine distributor, developed several options for a brand identity from which the final choice, "Taking Root," was selected.

Acorex plans to introduce four wines in the series: Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, and Bastardo-Cabernet Sauvignon — all in the £4.99 price range. The brand launch took place at the 2007 London International Wine and Spirits Fair, but to build momentum for its debut, Acorex also exhibited at ProWein in Germany. Already, the brand is receiving acclaim: "Taking Root" was nominated for the prestigious Drinks Business Design & Packaging Award 2007. And according to the company's general director, Sergei Borets, "We have high hopes for 'Taking Root' and believe it will help to secure our company's future as we move away from the Russian market."