

茶淀——天津“波尔多”

茶淀，天然的葡萄种植基地，一个和法国波尔多有着相同纬度的小镇。我选了一个晴空万里的日子，去那边观光游玩。

说实话，能在泥泞贫瘠的汉沽找到一处土壤肥沃，遍地耕种的庄园实在难得。玉米地、葡萄园、加之道路两旁郁郁葱葱的灌木，这里更有南方的感觉。茶淀葡萄园培育的都是温室葡萄。一株株葡萄整齐的生长在温室里，它们延伸的弧度形成一条漂亮的隧道。大串的葡萄垂挂在架上，虽然只有点点泛紫，但却个个饱满多汁。工作人员说七月中旬是采摘的好时节。葡萄架的中间还间或种植了其它蔬菜。这里的果蔬全部有机种植，不用洗便可食用。这个庄园有大约49种葡萄，很多都是我们熟悉的品种，游客可自行采摘。温室一角设有休息区，在这样一个环境宜人果蔬新鲜的地方游览，的确是件享受的事情。

出了这个庄园不远处，就是赫赫有名的孟庄园葡萄酒有限公司。孟庄园有一个关于世界葡萄酒史的博物馆。里面记载着中西葡萄酒文化，从葡萄的起源追溯到葡萄酒的传说，以及葡萄酒文明在世界范围内的传播。天津渤海湾是整个城市的主要酿酒基地，很多著名的中国红酒，比如张裕、长城、王朝、威龙，都出自这个地方。

孟庄园葡萄园采用传统的户外种植方式。工作人员会在葡萄串的外面套上小袋以防止昆虫和大雨的袭击。这里通常在九月收获，这个时候来，不仅可以参观生产区，还可以在工作人员的指引下，亲自酿酒。博物馆的下面还藏有一个巨大的酒窖。200个装满原料的橡木桶静静的躺在那里，等待发酵，只需一年的沉淀，它们便可装瓶出售了。

16摄氏度，不仅是理想的储酒温度，还是让人赏酒的绝佳温度。酒架安静的倚墙而立，上面摆放的红酒都是为特别的客人所准备。在阴暗处，有一张被聚光灯照耀的木质桌，桌上摆放着一些酒样。你可以在品尝过后再决定是否购买，尝酒的价格是30元。我并不是品酒的行家，但最后还是选了两瓶华梦金干红，售价是每瓶49元。

在孟庄园的门口就有回汉沽的公交车。我带着我的两瓶酒去朋友家里吃烧烤。他们觉得这酒中带有樱桃的香气，酒味浓郁，果香弥漫。从汽酒的角度来看，这绝对是一瓶好酒。

The area is known as the Chadian region and is at the same latitude as Bordeaux in France, the climate and soil is reportedly good for grape cultivation.

had been told that the Grape Park looks like part of Europe. Certainly there is a continental influence to the architecture of the buildings and villas. Likewise, the heat beating down from the mid morning sun, the smell of the freshly mown lawn and the beds of lavender feel familiar and maybe I could be fooled to believe I am in France. But like many things in China, the scale of the place gives its location away. Few vineyards in Europe would design an entrance with Greek colonnades or gardens resembling the palace of Versailles. Of course typically of China, much of it is still being constructed.

I meet Mr Zhang who is one of the engineers on the estate and he shows me some huge greenhouses. Inside Grapevines are growing in neat lines, their arms arching overhead to provide a series of leafy tunnels. They are all labelled with familiar names such as Chardonnay, Merlot and Muscat. The temperature, lighting and humidity is carefully controlled and under the glass it's much cooler in the dappled shade of the vines than outside. Large bunches of grapes hang down still green but already juicy and some turning

Chadian, Tianjin's Bordeaux

by Robert Watt

I am lucky that the day I travel out to Tianjin's vineyards is a day of bright sun and clear blue sky. The road out to the Chadian Grape Park passes through a part of Tianjin which is lush with fields and farms. Under today's unfiltered sun the area is full of colour; rivers run blue and the banks are dotted with people fishing into blooms of bright green algae.

The fertility of the area is a dramatic contrast to the muddy wastelands

approaching Hanggu and the grey dust dryness of the city. Fields are full of tall maize and arbours of vines and soft fruits. The roadsides are alive with thick long grass. The scene looks more like southern China than the parched fields that surround most of the city and its conurbations.

The area is known as the Chadian region and is at the same latitude as Bordeaux in France, the climate and soil is reportedly good for grape cultivation. Not surprising then that I



Chadian



grapes

black. I'm told they will be ready for picking from the middle of July.

Between the lines of vines, tomatoes, aubergines, runner beans and bell peppers are growing. Mr Liu picks a handful of ripe tomatoes and a small cucumber for me. He says there is no need to wash them as everything is grown organically. The tomato is sweet and juicy.

There are 49 varieties of grapes grown on the estate mostly they are table varieties including seedless grapes. People can come and pick the fruit and vegetables themselves and eat a picnic at the tables arranged at one end of the greenhouse beneath the vine canopy. Being so far back from the road, it's wonderfully peaceful and a pleasant place to rest and eat the fresh tomatoes in the air, rich in oxygen.

As well as the greenhouses there are fields growing more grapes, vegetables and soft fruit. The greenhouses provide a controlled environment that allows the fruit to be grown from July to October. Strawberries are available from May. There is also a large pond of geese and a restaurant that serves meals made from their own vegetables.

Not far away is another large vineyard



outside

Mr Zhang

known as the Mengzhuangyuan Wine company. The emphasis here is very much on wine production and is the home of HuaMeng wine which is produced from their Muscat Hamburg grapes.

As well as producing wine there is a museum about the history of wine around the world and in China. I am surprised to learn that Wine making and brandy production in China stretches back 2000 years and that the area around the Bohai bay is the country's leading wine producing area. Chinese wine companies that you will be familiar with such as Changyu, Great wall, Dynasty and Weilong are all from this area. There is an interesting section detailing legends and myths from many countries around the world about wine and the infamous characters that have celebrated its consumption. It also explains the otherwise random selection of statues that decorate the estate.

At Mengzhuangyuan, the grapes are all traditionally grown outdoors and there are over a 1000 acres of vines. The grape bunches

hanging from the vine have been placed in small bags to protect them from insects and from any heavy rain. Depending on the weather the harvest is usually around September. At this time its possible to tour the wine production area and even make your own wine under the guidance of their Engineer. Below the museum, there is a large underground cellar. Here 200 oak barrels stand, filled with last years wine slowly maturing, for 1 year before being bottled for sale.

At 16 degrees centigrade the cellar is not just an excellent environment for storing wine, but also a deliciously cool and moist place to linger. Along the walls of the silent cellar are racks for storing bottles of wine. They are thinly populated with rare and expensive vintages which are being stored on behalf of customers. In the shadows, there is a wooden table where the highlight and reason for the tour concludes with the sampling of some of their products. The wine tasting is 30RMB and an excellent way to help decide which case of wine to take home. I'm not a wine expert myself and at last chose two bottles of Huameng Golden Dry Red Wine. At 49RMB a bottle, the choice is made more on price than taste or attractiveness of the label.

I catch the 455 bus back to Hangu which conveniently leaves from outside the Mengzhuangyuan Wine company's entrance. Later that evening, I go to a barbeque at a friends house and we open one of the bottles to share with the guests. The wine is a bit warm after an afternoon of sloshing around in my back pack, but I'm anxious to collect peoples opinions. We all notice that the colour is surprisingly light and Joel thinks it has a Cherry aroma. It tastes quite strong, fruity and sweet. Finally we all agree it made a very good Sangria.

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villas