



# CHAIRMAN MOU TAI

Charles Oon gets high talking about Chinese wines

Charles Oon, 43, may shy away from calling himself the brainchild behind Multico Pte Ltd—the distributor of MouTai wine—and its growth in the region. But there is no denying that the company's Group CEO, deserves a toast for his efforts

## What is your preferred way to drinking MouTai wines with?

I do not constraint myself to the stereotypes of pairing white meat with white wine and red meats with red wine. As long as it suits your fancy, any way is the right way to enjoy MouTai wines!

## What kind of tactics do you use to overcome competition from other wine strongholds?

There is no denying the stereotypes of Made-In-China brands. But since *mou tai bai jiu* (rice wine) has been around for 2000 years, our strategy is to play up on its past as a branding

device for MouTai the label. The onus was on us to make MouTai visible, but selectively—you cannot buy it just anywhere! This strategy has worked. Any product bearing this name must be of a certain calibre.

## We heard that you once made a gargantuan leap of faith?

I left my job as a naval Captain and headed to Thailand to work in a trading company. Thailand in the '80s was a chaotic 'cowboy town', and speaking no Thai initially proved to be the biggest challenge. I took a substantial pay cut to move there but I felt this was something I had to do. I guess putting myself in a compelling environment was the best place to learn.

## So, is the MouTai winery really heavily guarded?

Yes, by the Chinese army no less. It is a national treasure after all!