

# China: Beer Industry Sales

## SABMiller China JV sees '06 sales jump

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SHANGHAI (Reuters) - Brewing giant SABMiller Plc's China venture expects its 2006 sales to grow by over a fifth from a year earlier as it banks on robust demand in the world's largest beer market.

China Resources Snow Breweries (CRSB) -- 49 percent controlled by SABMiller -- sold 3.95 million hectolitres of beer in China in 2005, CRSB chief marketing officer Hou Xiaohai told Reuters on Wednesday.

"Our sales rose roughly 30 percent in the first half. Full-year growth will probably be over 20 percent, similar with that of last year."

SABMiller competes with the likes of InBev and Anheuser-Busch in the world's top beer market by volume, which is growing at up to 10 percent annually as incomes rise.

It commanded between a 13 and 14 percent share of China's market, Hou said, which puts it on a par with market leader Tsingtao Brewery Co. Ltd., which had a 13.9 percent share at the end of June, according to company data.

Tsingtao, part-owned by Anheuser-Busch, sold 2.28 million hectolitres of beer in the first six months, up 10.5 percent.

It aims to sell 4.4 million hectolitres in the full-year, an 8 percent increase over 2005.

(from reuters.co.uk, 7/09/06)