

All about fine wine and fun!

Pics: Parag Jadhav

To popularise wine culture in the city, Vallonne Vineyards and Malaka Spice came together to offer Puneites some fresh and fine taste to remember this year. **The Vallonne-Malaka Grape Stomping Fest** at Malaka Spice restaurant, Koregaon Park, allured guests with activities ranging from wine testing and grape stomping to games revolving around wine.

"Through this fest, we plan to promote different kinds of wines. The idea is to make people familiar with wine," Shailendra Pai, Managing Director & CEO, Vallonne Vineyards said. "I have noticed that people in Pune are very eager to learn about wine. The degree of pretension is very less here and people are more open in saying, 'we don't understand about wines'. This attitude inspires us to promote events like this where people can find out more about wine," Pai revealed.

As more people poured in to lavishly wine and dine, the free-flowing wine — Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon classique, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon blanc and Chenin blanc — soon had everyone feeling the buzz. Enriko, a German photographer chilling out with his buddies, said, "I like the new wine more than the old wine. Cabernet Sauvignon 2011 is very nice. The taste of the fruit is much better." Another wine-lover, Aslesha Sabla — a graphic design student, said, "Compared to last year, this year we have more wines to taste. Moreover, the fruit pieces in the wine add up to the taste."

Malaka Spice owner, Praful Chandawarkar, said, "We plan to push domestic wines and break the myths surrounding wine-drinking. Maharashtra's vineyards produce really really good wines."

About developing the taste for good wine, Chandawarkar said, "In my restaurant, I allow people to trust their tastes. One should know the basic fundamentals, for example that white wine should be taken at the same temp as cold beer, and red wine should be served at room temperature just cool enough to touch. Apart from this, one should like what one drinks. It is no more complicated than that!"

— SONIA K KURUP

