

Business Standard

TRENDING ON BS

#KollamFire

#AssemblyPolls

Search

News

[Beyond Business](#) » [Columns](#) » Columns

A toast to Indian wines

Alok Chandra | Bangalore

August 11, 2012 Last Updated at 00:09 IST



Last week I visited seven wineries in [Nashik](#) and Bangalore and tasted about 100 wines from nine different wineries — part of an effort to identify good [Indian wines](#) suitable for export.

While it was no surprise to find some really good wines, what was great was to discover some amazing flavours and aromas. Contrary to popular perception, the general quality of the wines I tasted was good, with some wines definitely very good, and in two instances, excellent.

Nashik is best reached by road from Mumbai — it is about 170 km northeast from the city along NH3, and as it's been four-laned all the way, should take about three hours. If you turn off left on the Wadivare road about 25 km short of Nashik, you will reach [Vallee de Vin](#) (Zampa), whose [Sauvignon Blanc 2011](#) has an amazing aroma of ripe guava and passion fruit — similar to a New Zealand Marlborough wine — and whose Syrah 2010 I found to be terrific, with smooth tannins and pronounced fruit.

Close by is Vallonne Vineyards, whose French winemaker [Marie Barbe](#) took us through a tasting of wines with a very interesting smoky character — I thought their 2011 Cab and Merlot Reserves were particularly good.

Nearer Nashik, reached through a mess of industrial factories, adjacent to Sula and on the shores of the Gangapur Lake is York Winery, whose Shiraz 2009 and Reserve Shiraz 2009 were both good, with spice and fruit and some body and the Reserve displaying smoothness and oak. Interestingly, Moet Hennessey India chose York to produce its sparkling wines, and the cellars are piled up with bottles from the 2011 and 2012 vintages, probably to be released end 2013. York also produces wines for Good Earth as well as Turning Point, so they remain quite busy.

However, it is in the area between Dindori (30 km north) and Niphad (30 km east) that most of the vineyards around Nashik are located — miles of them, mainly Thompson Seedless for export, but also the occasional vitis vinifera. Vintage Wines has been producing wines under the Reveilo label since 2006, and pioneered Italian varietals: its Reveilo Grillo 2010 is nice, with some earthy/mushroomy character, but the Sangiovese 2010 is terrific, with classic black cherries and soft tannins, while their Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2009 is full-bodied and complex and good.

Then there is Chateau D'Ori, in the Dindori area, whose vineyards were started in 2003 and the first wines only in 2007. The winery uses cutting-edge winemaking techniques and has a dramatic circular architecture; their 2012 Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon are both good wines, while the very limited quantities of the 2008 Cab and Syrah from barrels are just terrific!

From Bangalore the Alpine Winery is three hours off the Mysore road, near the pilgrimage town of Talakadu. The 1,250-acre property is visible on Google Earth — 240 acres have been planted and the Rs 125 crore investment will enable scaling-up of production to well over 1 million litres. Their Vindiva Classic Shiraz 2011 and Vindiva Reserve Shiraz 2010 are both good wines, but what was terrific was the yet-to-be-released Sauvignon Blanc 2012 with an amazing vanilla aroma that just blew me away.

And these were wines just from the wineries we visited. If we get even a few of these wines into restaurants overseas, I am sure consumers will start seeing Indian wines in a very different light.

Alok Chandra is a Bangalore-based wine consultant

READ MORE ON INDIAN WINES NASHIK SAUVIGNON BLANC 2011
 VALLEE DE VIN IS VALLONNE VINEYARDS MARIE BARBE BS WEEKEND
 BEYOND BUSINESS COLUMNS

PREVIOUS STORY

A penitent from Abu Ghraib



NEXT STORY

Sanjay Leela Bhansali: The picture perfectionist



RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

You Might Also Like