

Indian Producers for Brand India at World Wine Symposium

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August 25 : It will be a historical step when two Indian quality wine producers - Four Seasons and Fratelli will participate and pour their wines to the top wine personalities of the world at the 4th edition of World Wine Symposium, being held on November 8-11 at Villa d'Este, one of the most charming hotel resorts on Lake Como in Italy. Subhash Arora who plans to attend once again, writes



World Wine Symposium (WWS), also known as *Devo du Vin*, is an annual event started in 2009 by François Mauss, Founder President of the Grand Jury Européen, with the objective of creating a global forum for principal stakeholders in the world of fine wine - including producers, suppliers, distributors, *négociants*, journalists, politicians and connoisseurs. 'Wine is not simply a commercial commodity, rather, it is a product infused with historical and cultural dimensions that must be protected and defended,' says Mauss.

WWS aims to be a unique global think-tank, where people from different sectors of the industry can meet to discuss common historical, social, political, economic and cultural interests and important topical issues in the world of fine wine. Seminars, discussions, and workshops led by prominent figures in the wine industry are the backbone of the event.

The Symposium takes place over a three-day period at the magnificent 5-star deluxe hotel Villa d'Este on Lake Como in Italy. Participants in the first three editions came from over 20 different countries. Simultaneous translations are available at each seminar allowing guests to participate regardless of their native language. Acknowledging the multi-lingual character of the participants (although to a rank outsider it may appear that French is the de-facto language spoken here) translation facilities are offered in several languages so one does not ever feel out of place.

'I am very happy that Indian producers and connoisseurs will be taking part in the conference for the first time, says Mauss, 'besides of course, Subhash Arora, who has been invited as a journalist every year. Dr. Bipin Desai, the world renowned wine collector and connoisseur from India has been a participant but is a US citizen now.'

Bangalore based Four Seasons with vineyards and winery in Maharashtra, and Fratelli Wines –the first equity based Indo-Italian JV in winemaking, have decided to take part as the first-ever Indian producer participants. Grover Vineyard was very keen to participate after the re-organisation but had to regret it due to Diwali, the important Hindu festival when a majority of people like to be with their families.

'This will indeed go a long way in creating awareness about Wines from India in a forum which is one of the most respected globally,' says Abhay Kewadkar Business Head of UB group's wine division, adding, 'What an honor it will be to showcase Ritu range of wines along with the best of International wines and great winemakers.'

Four Seasons will be showcasing four of their best wines - Ritu Cabernet Sauvignon Barrique Reserve 09 and Ritu Shiraz Barrique Reserve 09, Ritu Viognier '12 and Rose' 12. 'I am certain this participation will go a long way in establishing Ritu brand globally,' says Abhay who has been very excited and encouraged with the excellent feedback recently in the UK Press besides healthy sales there.

Fratelli has been moving in the fast track and has already created a name in the domestic market because of the high quality standards and hands-on approach of their winemaker partner from Italy. They already have a vision of being the Top Two wine producers in India and were quick to decide to participate. 'When Mr. Subhash Arora suggested we take part to showcase our wines to the august gathering, we sensed his implicit recognition of our quality being of international class and we knew we would do India proud and so we instantly consented.

Unfortunately, I am constrained to remain in India at that time. But our Italian partner Alessio Secci has registered and will be there,' says Kapil Sekhri, Delhi - based partner who is one of the 'Sette' (seven) partners.

Kapil Grover called to say they were very keen to attend, 'but I have to regret your kind invitation for this year, only from the point of view of schedule. I have briefed you about many things which I have to attend to during that time. We looked at the proposal very seriously and I hope that you will extend this offer next time, when I promise we will make it happen.' Sula had a similar problem with Rajeev Samant already committed during the period.

The sentiments of the producers find endorsement from Joel Payne, well-known American-German journalist, judge and editor of the well-known German annual wine guide Gault Millau. In India recently to present German VDP wines to the trade at the residence of the Ambassador of Germany, he says, 'I certainly think that the occasional event like this (World Wine Symposium) is a boon. Some of the lectures are quite good, you never know who you might meet and, as we know, the setting is stunning. I would go every year, but sometimes the timing is not right and of course, I cannot justify the expense if I have to pay. For a producer from India, the issue is not the money, but timing...and the upside networking. They must learn what the true wine world is like. For now, most are living in an isolated world or in the Indian Diaspora abroad.'

Last year a group of affluent wine connoisseurs from Malaysia was seen at the symposium for similar reasons. Always grouped together around the dinner table, one of the members told me, 'where else would we find the opportunity to taste and drink such a large number of fabulous wines with excellent food, spend three nights in such a charming hotel and get to meet so many top wine personalities?' Quite a brilliant idea for those with a lavish lifestyle built around fine wines and gourmet food.

Delhi Wine Club has been organising trips for a select few members to places like Vinexpo, Wines for Asia Singapore and Nashik. A few members of the Delhi Wine Club have been motivated to attend the conference which at €3850 for two as Registration charge is not cheap even by European standards. But as wine lifestyle and "*l'art de vivre*", few events can beat the magical moments during this event. Besides the 3-night stay at one of the best, most luxurious and classic hotels on the lake with beautiful scenic views, it's only a part of the excitement awaiting the registrants. All meals with an unending stream of excellent wines are included. An interlude every night provided by top Italian and French classical musicians, the possibility to taste dozens of wines is still not enough of a reason to attend. Excellent sit-down lunches and dinners in the company of some of the most revered wine people is not a happenstance but a well thought about plan.

Parag Tripathy is a senior lawyer of the Supreme Court and the past Assistant Solicitor General of the Government of India. He also gave his instant approval when he heard about the event. 'We are so much under work pressure and time constraints at all times that a short break is always helpful and what better way to spend 4-5 days in a totally different dream world that Cav. Subhash Arora has pictured for us. We have never gone wrong with any event organised by him since we joined the Club. My wife Neelima and I are really excited to be a part of this programme.'

C. S Vaidyanathan, a Supreme Court lawyer who loves fine wines with great food, is always game for something as delectable as this conference. He says 'frankly I am going there because Subhash said it will be interesting and yes, Parag Tripathy is also going', adding in jest the court parlance, 'It is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; so help me God.'

With the special optional vertical tasting of 8 vintages lined up for Masseto (Tenuta dell'Ornellaia),

Grands Echezeaux and Richebourg (Domaine de La Romanée Conti) and Yquem (Château Yquem), a quantum jump is in store for the palates of these members of the Delhi Wine Club. The past prestige tastings have included a vertical of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti's La Tâche starting in 1953, a horizontal of the 1990 vintage of the top Cru Classés of Bordeaux and a vertical of Tenuta San Guido's Sassicaia dating back to 1977.

For programme and any other information please contact the organizers directly, at <http://www.worldwinesymposium.com/uk/> or email contact@davosduvin.com.