

Her World In A Bottle

Written by Nupur Chaudhuri | Published: October 1, 2011 2:02 am

Wine sommelier Lindsay Groves on why wine tops her favourites list

"I am particularly fond of champagne, but who isn't?" says wine sommelier Lindsay Groves. For the last one week, Groves conducted wine, cheese and meat tastings as well as internal workshops at the Westin, Koregaon Park. Her passion and enthusiasm for wine sparked as she introduced hotel guests to her expertise.

Her relationship with wines began when she was a French Immersion student in high school in Canada. "I participated in French exchange programmes and was exposed to European culture as a teenager. I went to University for a year (studying Political Science and Philosophy) before making the decision to leave and apply for the Wine & Viticulture program at Niagara College. This new program, located in the midst of the major wine growing region in Canada, was my official introduction into the wine industry," she says. Her passion for wine only grew. "Because wine is a part of a larger philosophy," she says, adding, "Wine is a way of travelling, giving us the opportunity to experience a particular place and time that has been captured in a bottle."

Starting with production and then shifting to hospitality, Groves has worked in different sectors of the wine industry. "I worked at stand-alone restaurants in Canada. Via Allegro in Toronto was the most memorable. It is a Wine Spectator Grand Award-winning Italian restaurant with a wine list of over 8,000 labels. I later worked briefly with a small wine importer, conducting tastings and developing support materials," reveals Groves, who also won the Sommelier of The Year Award for her work. She then started her own consulting business and even focussed on writing on wine, food and travel for different publications.

Wine events are rarely complete without wine pairings. But it ultimately is all about an individual's preference. "One of the simplest ways is to pair food and wine from the same locality, as often the two have evolved naturally to complement one another. When there is no local wine tradition, the pairing requires a bit more creativity," she explains. Groves praises the Indian wineries that have crafted solid wines keeping in mind local food and flavours. "I feel that the majority of wine consumers here are at the point where they know to some extent what they enjoy, but have not branched out to experiment with more diverse styles of wine," she adds.

Over the years, the world wine market has seen many changes. One is the growing popularity of New World Wines. "Wines from Australia and California are now very popular because they are readily available and are often more reasonably priced. New World wines also tend to be more concentrated, fruit-driven and approachable in style," she observes.

Technically sound and squeaky clean wines can sometimes be boring, she admits. "I really enjoy more idiosyncratic wines, that have their own distinctive character. Like people, it's often the slight imperfections that make them lovable," she says.