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Ice, ice baby

*Canadian Lindsay Groves is one person in many roles: Sommelier, winery & viticulture technician and wine journalist. She is currently sommelier with The Oberoi Mumbai - the city's first female sommelier. **Steena Joy** spoke to her to get her views on the potential for icewine in India*

Is India ready for a fine wine like icewine?



As wine culture is in the early stages, I have found that many Indians, especially women and the younger demographic, still prefer to drink wines that are fruitier in style, have some residual sugar, and often choose whites or roses over fuller bodied red wines. Icewine fits in well with this trend as it's easy to enjoy with an upfront style - sweet, aromatic, luscious, fruit/floral driven. Icewine is immediately enjoyable and does not require wine knowledge to appreciate (whereas for instance Burgundies and other more subtle wines can be a little more demanding).

How can icewine be promoted in India?

As wine knowledge and culture develop, icewine stands out from many other styles of wine in that it is made in a unique way, is not produced in many places and has a strong identity.

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This presents a great opportunity to engage individuals who are looking to learn more about wine - icewine is a unique product that has a "story" behind it. Icewine can easily be promoted through educational opportunities such as classes, winemaker's dinners etc supported obviously by strong marketing and branding. However, the success of icewine would be very much contingent on an effective marketing campaign and would need strong branding and image from the get go.

I think there is huge potential for a solid producer to establish themselves as a leader in the Indian market for this particular style of wine.

Will it go with Indian cuisine?

It's always debated what kind of wines do or don't go with Indian cuisine. If you ask anyone in the wine industry what complements spicy, exotic foods its fairly unanimous that off-dry to sweet wines with lower alcohol content and aromatic fruity/floral profile are the best option. Usually something along the lines of a Gewurztraminer, Muscat or Riesling is recommended. Most commonly, icewine is made from either Vidal (a white hybrid grown in Canada that exhibits very aromatic floral and honeyed character) or Riesling. Both these varieties have flavour profiles that are well-suited to Indian food. In addition to this, icewine is made in a style that is obviously sweet and fairly low in alcohol (commonly between 10-12 per cent) that is conducive to Indian cuisine.

Can icewine be termed a luxury product for a market like India?

India has a large (and rapidly growing) middle class that has an interest and the means to buy what we would consider "luxury" items. In terms of the drinks industry, items such as Champagne and single malt Scotch whisky have already performed very well and are in demand. Likewise, icewine is a product that has a reputation as a luxury product with a high level of prestige. Icewine is also a popular choice to purchase as a gift because it 1) appeals to nearly all palates 2) has a reputation as a higher-end product and 3) can age for several years. Because of this, icewine also has potential in terms of corporate gifting.

[**See Related Article: [Warming up to icewines](#)**]

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