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## Full-Bodied Flavour

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### **Certified sommelier Lindsay Groves pairs some hot dishes with cool wines. Shirin Mehta discovers a lady with a passion**

She knows her full bodied red from her fruity white. “Break the rules; don’t listen to me,” laughs Lindsay Groves, the Oberoi Group’s newly-arrived, charmingly-pretty head sommelier, based in Mumbai. The sun filters through the enormous glass windows of the atrium at The Oberoi, Mumbai and strikes a fiery note on her blonde hair as we chat over cups of kawa chai. Lindsay left university to study oenology and viticulture at Niagara College, Canada, where she lives, and has worked in wineries both at home and abroad, most notably in Champagne, Bordeaux and Stellenbosch, South Africa. “I learnt from the ground up and enjoyed the production side,” she says, “I was doing harvest after harvest in France and South Africa.”

The certified sommelier has worked at fine dining establishments in Toronto, including Via Allegro, which boasts one of the world’s best wine cellars and was recognised as ‘Ontario Sommelier of the Year’ in 2007 by the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation. More recently, she was selected as one of the Ontario Hospitality Institute’s ‘Top 30 Under 30’. “I like almost any kind of wine in the right context.... People have pre-conceived notions but a lot depends on the surrounding, the company you are with...a lot of things come into play. I am very open-minded about this.” Probed further, she admits: “My all-time, desert island wine would be Champagne!” She enjoys cooking with wine and while she cooks, she drinks. “It’s a nice way of tying it up. One rule is, don’t cook with anything you would not drink. And don’t use lots of wine in your cooking; just a little, to deglaze.”

Lindsay is upbeat about India’s nascent wine industry. She has visited vineyards in Nasik and come away impressed. “People are doing a good job. A lot of money is going into the industry. I do drink local, since it is more practical, due to the tax structure. Indian wines tend to be fairly new world, well-concentrated, with a fruit-driven style. There is a lot that’s going on and it is all very exciting.”

We ask Lindsay to pair appropriate wines with popular dishes at The Oberoi’s plush restaurants, Ziya and Vetro. You may use her detailed suggestions to undertake some pairings of your own...

#### ***A Fine Pair***

Lindsay Groves’ three easy tips for food and wine pairing...

#### ***Regionality***

The easiest way is to stick to geographical regions. If you are cooking Italian, serve an Italian wine. And so on....

#### ***Versatility***

You cannot go wrong using versatile wines like Pinot Noir or a nice Rosé....

#### ***Experimenting***

Drink what you like to drink with what you like to eat. Do not listen to everyone else. Go break the rules!

#### ***HAUTE INDIAN, ZIYA***

(Dishing up Michelin Star chef, Vineet Bhatia’s contemporary fine dining cuisine that happens to use Indian preparations.)

#### ***Patti Aloo***

#### ***2009 Sauvignon Blanc***

#### ***‘The Broken Fishplate’, D’Arenberg, McLaren Vale, Australia***

This vegetarian main course features potato rolls filled with asparagus and corn, nestled on a bed of

South Indian beetroot and curry leaf khichdi, finished with a flavourful kokum-coconut sauce. A riper style of Sauvignon Blanc such as the 2009 'Broken Fishplate' from Australian producer D'Arenberg is a great choice as an accompaniment. The added volume stemming from its hot climate origins helps to balance the weight of the starch content of the potato and rice. The softer acidity in this wine and rounder mouthfeel work well with the hint of sweetness from the beetroot and coconut sauce. The tropical fruit character – kiwi, passionfruit, candied citrus peel – along with the vegetal aromas in the wine complement the asparagus, coconut and mild spice flavours.

### **Tandoori Ginger Lamb Chops**

#### ***2007 Zinfandel 'Old Vines', St Francis, Sonoma County, California, USA***

Cooking anything in the tandoor automatically amps up the intensity of the dish and imparts a lovely smoke and sweet char character. The sweet tangy ginger perfectly balances the flavours from the tandoor and the creamy black lentils laced with morel and truffle oil add another layer of richness. In order to compete with all of this flavour and intensity, the accompanying wine should be equally generous. What tends to work best is a medium to full bodied red with up front ripe fruit character. New world reds tend to work well because of their ripeness and concentration, but it's important to choose something that is not excessively oaky or tannic – these two factors can react negatively with the spice and smoke character found in the dish. A good choice would be the plump and juicy Zinfandel from St Francis, Sonoma County, California. With bright acidity and plummy black fruit and berry character, it is smooth and approachable in texture and shows good concentration of flavour.

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