

20 **HITLIST** THE GUIDE *to food/art/books/shops/culture*



Lindsay Groves will teach you the nuances of pairing Indian food with wine

BASIC POINTERS FOR PAIRING

- ▶ **TOMATO-BASED DISHES (MILD):** Normally medium-bodied reds with upbeat acidity work best, as tomatoes are high in acidity and can cause lower-acid wines to taste flat. Several Italian varieties are well-suited such as wines made from Barbera, Sangiovese or a new world style Pinot Noir.
- ▶ **TOMATO BASED DISHES (SPICY):** Once you have a spicy dish, you need to choose a wine that has enough concentration to compete with the food. New world reds from warmer climates can work well such as Merlot, Shiraz and Malbec. Try to stick with wines that have a fruity character as it gives the impression of sweetness to complement the spice. Try to avoid wines that are high in tannin and alcohol (i.e. over 14%) as heat from the alcohol will make spice seem hotter.
- ▶ **TANDOOR DISHES:** Foods cooked in a tandoor have more intensity and a smoky character. New world reds work well here, specifically varieties that show good concentration and fruitiness. Shiraz, Malbec, Pinotage or South African red would be a good choice.
- ▶ **MILD CREAM OR YOGURT-BASED DISHES:** They tend to work best with fuller bodied white wines, hence, an oaked Chardonnay is an obvious choice because of its creamy texture and substantial weight.
- ▶ **INDIAN DESSERTS:** Anything sweet needs to be matched with a wine of equal or greater sweetness, otherwise the wine will taste thin and aggressive. Try a well-balanced late harvest Chenin Blanc from a local producer, an Australian 'sticky' dessert wine, or a Sauternes or Barsac.

WINE AND DINE IN STYLE

Learn how to pair Indian food with a variety of wines from wine sommelier Lindsay Groves

WORKSHOP

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Pune has steadily become a hub for wine connoisseurs and wine has quite a fan following in the city. This week, the city's wine lovers can look forward to a session with Lindsay Groves, a passionate wine professional who is recognised as one of the most promising young sommeliers in Canada. Groves will guide wine lovers on the basics of wine pairing with Indian food.

Food weds wine

According to Groves, the perfect pairing depends on personal preferences to a large extent. "As a professional, we look at factors such as intensity and concentration, weight / body, sweetness levels, acidity levels, level

of tannin present in the wine, nature of aromas and how the various components found in wine and food will interact. However, this is looking at food and wine matching from a theoretical point of view. Although, we can anticipate how a food and wine can react, it really comes down to trying out the combination at a practical level," she says.

An open mind is one of the prerequisites of successful pairing. "I would encourage each individual to keep an open mind and experiment. But it all comes down to whatever you personally find pleasurable. Focusing too much on finding the "perfect" match takes the fun out of eating and drinking," she says.

Indian tadka v/s sparkling wine

One thing that Groves admits to have learned in India is that it's impossible to generalise "Indian food". Even a basic dish such as Dal Makhni has just as many variations as there are people who cook it. Because of this,

it's not easy to tell which dish will definitively go with a certain wine. "While pairing Indian dishes with wine, it is more important to look at the sauce, spices and the cooking method rather than the underlying ingredient, as these are what lends flavour and character to the food," shares Groves.

Mistakes people make

"The main mistake people make is adhering too closely to the rules. White wine doesn't always have to go with fish, nor does red wine always have to go with meat. If you don't step out of the box and try riskier combinations, you are missing out on many interesting experiences. Even if you do end up with a pairing that doesn't work, it's still a valuable learning experience and will help hone your wine and food pairing skills," she concludes.

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