

## Liberty backs Spurrier and Boisset's Indian wine collaborations

By Jo Gilbert

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Indian wine could be the next big thing if a new collaboration between a number of industry heavyweights is anything to go by.

Liberty Wines is backing distribution of two new ranges from high-altitude vineyards in the Indian province of Maharashtra.

The first, M/S wines, is a collaboration between Steven Spurrier, of the Judgement of Paris fame, and Tuscan winemaker Piero Masi via Fratelli vineyards, with whom he has been working in the country for some time.

The second is J'NOON – an unrelated project from Burgundian producer Jean-Charles Boisset.

"We are always hungry for new adventures in the wine world, especially when they have such quality focused people behind them as Piero Masi, Steven Spurrier and Jean-Charles Boisset," said Liberty's managing director David Gleave, MW on the portfolio additions.

"The small, highly specialist ranges from J'NOON and M/S are perfect for bolder, more adventurous restaurateurs and retailers with a genuine interest in what India's ancient soils and Europe's modern winemakers can produce."

Home to Mumbai, India's largest metropolis, Maharashtra is the country's third-largest state.

It is also where the vast majority of Indian wine is made, particularly in the farmland surrounding the Western Ghats mountain range.

J'NOON's fruit is grown in rocky vineyards at altitudes of 650 metres above sea level on the right bank of the Nira River, south of Pune.

Boisset's Burgundian influence can be seen in the barrel-fermented, Mâconnais style of J'NOON's Akluj White (60% Chardonnay/40% Sauvignon Blanc £29.99 RRP). The oak-aged Akluj Red (58% Cabernet Sauvignon/19% Petit Verdot/19% Marselan/4% Sangiovese, £35.99 RRP) aims to bring structure and ripeness of fruit which are often seen as lacking in Indian wines.

Meanwhile Indo-Italian venture Fratelli, between Masi and Indian businessmen Kapil and Gaurav Sekhri began in the mid 2000s, with the first batch of wines bottled in August 2010.

The new M/S collaboration brings Spurrier into the fold, whose other recent ventures include founding Dorset-based Bride Valley in 2011.

Spurrier's inaugural trio, Chardonnay/Sauvignon Blanc 2017, Sangiovese/Cabernet Franc/Shiraz and Sangiovese Rosé are all available via Liberty in the UK with an £14.99 RRP.