



Indian Wine Academy

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Junoon for Unique Wines brings J'noon from Fratelli & JCB

March 10: Fratelli Vineyards, the fastest growing wine producer of India has teamed up with one of its French/Californian producers Jean Charles Boisset (JCB) to launch 3 labels of super premium wines at super expensive prices to bring Indian wines notches above the current status globally, writes Subhash Arora who attended the launch party at the Deck at Hyatt Regency last Saturday and liked the new releases but finding the prices high



Jean Charles with Sekhri family launching JCB47

March 3 was the 'Black and Gold' letter day in the ongoing wine history of India, when three labels of a **JCB Brut J'noon White** and **J'noon Red** Indian wines made in International style for international markets were launched in Delhi jointly by Fratelli Vineyards and Jean Charles Boisset of the Boisset Collection of California and France. The Launch was followed later in Bangalore and Mumbai before JCB as he is fondly called, went back after the trip exclusive for the Launch.

The Deck at the **Hyatt Regency** was beautifully bedecked and ready to welcome the 400 invited guests. It was welcome coincidence for me to run into the man of the evening- Jean Charles Boisset (JCB), owner of Boisset Collection, partnering with Fratelli for the new labels being launched. JCB who was here from California with Leigh Ann Reed, International Sales Manager, Boisset Collection and Patrick Egan, Marketing and Communications, was very excited and at his flamboyant best.

The first question I shot at Jean Charles Boisset as I met him was how the concept came into his mind. 'After my trip to Delhi last year, I was coaxed to visit their

winery in Akluj, Blending being my passion, I spent one full day blending and tasting wines and realised these wines had a terroir and a personality that would be welcome in Europe and America. And voila, **J'noon** label was born!

It's janoon- the passion, the obsession that Jean-Charles has had for decades that made him chart a different world for his wines- taking the Jean-Claude Boisset Burgundy wines to much higher prices-starting upwards in their price from where they had ended after he and his sister revamped the winery of their parents J.C. Boisset in Burgundy. The prices had ranged generally from \$4 to \$30 appx. He had conceded to me in an interview in Hong Kong where I met him first in October 2016 that his father Jean Claude Boisset had started the winery in early 1960's by buying grapes and selling wines at very low rates (it was then imported in India by Global Duty Free).

Wines

The wines for the evening, before the new labels were launched with **Sonam Kalra** a well-known Sufi singer invited for the invocation-with a short recital of Rumi's poetry, that I enjoyed tasting were the JCB 69 Brut Rose and a Fratelli white wine M/S (created by Masi and Spurrier), a blend of 80% Chardonnay and 20% Sauvignon.

J'NOON White

The most popular wine of the evening was a blend of Chardonnay/Sauvignon Blanc (60/40%) where Chardonnay is barrel fermented. Based on Pouilly-Fuisse style, the oak is just right making it a complex wine that is easily drinkable and will also last a long time. Its price is at Rs. 2500, as compared to their MS white at around Rs.1500 and top-ended Vitae Chardonnay at Rs. 1450. Well-integrated and structured wine has nice vibrant acidity and is a rather pleasurable wine with fruity flavours. It becomes the most expensive Indian white wine.

J'NOON Red

Unlike the white wine, the red is a new and rather interesting blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (57.5%), Petit Verdot/Marcelan (38.5%) and a miniscule proportion of Sangiovese (4%), ostensibly to add colour and acidity to the wine. Marcelan has been grown from day 1 at the winery and has been a favourite grape of the winemaker Piero Masi who used it in various blends. The proportion of grapes is rather quirky going to .5%: at least I have never found it stated in any other winery. At the MRP of Rs. 4,000, it is now the most expensive wine in India-double the cost of the hitherto sold Cabernet Sauvignon from KRSMA which sells for Rs. 2000 in Bangalore after debuting at Rs. 1500 a few years ago. Sette has been the most expensive wine from Fratelli, selling at Rs. 1800-1850 a bottle.

The wine is quite perfumed with plenty of red fruit, the colour is not as dark as perhaps Sette- there is plenty of red fruit and very good structure- it should age for 5-8 years- very young to drink at the moment.





One can see the passion Jean-Charles has for India and the Indian Terroir that he is using the label JCB 47 for the bubbly made from Chardonnay. It has plenty of brioche and exotic fruits in the flavour. Very complex wine, it tasted slightly bitter at the end. Chardonnay can have a shade of bitter taste but perhaps it reflects the complexity attained after 24 months in the French barrel. Overall a majority of people I talked to seemed to love the wine-one is not sure they would shell out Rs. 3500 when wines like Chandon sell for around Rs. 1500. Even Sula Blanc de Blancs Brut (Chardonnay) sells for Rs. 1800 in Maharashtra.

JCB likes to put his money where his mouth is. He has placed an order of 2000 bottles to be exported in the first instance. With a total production slated at merely 7200 bottles (2400 bottle of each variant), it may not be difficult to sell these wines at the prices-there are many collectors who would pick up the wine-apparently 800 bottles were ordered at the venue in Delhi. There would have been equivalent numbers ordering at those 2 venues, making the availability of 2800 bottles for the whole the year.

Prices

They say good wine is the one which you drink with friends- and they are free! Every invitee to the Launch at the Deck at Hyatt Regency was naturally a friend and one could see people clamouring for any one of the three variants- JCB 47 (until the launch took place I was honestly under the impression it was inspired by the AK47 gun which would go better with the image of Jean-Charles Boisset who is also known fondly as James Bond of wine industry. He is fond of quirky labels with numbers of some significance; I was drinking JCB Cremant Brut Rose 69 and before you start speculating about the genesis, JCB (as he is popularly known) was born in 1969.

In fact, JCB is a range of his labels- expensive looking- gold letters embossed or printed on black bottle, making them look elegant but masculine. In that sense JCB 47 would be a big benefit for Fratelli as it would become a part of the universal portfolio of JCB labels. He already has international Labels- JCB 21, 69, 8, 13, 34, 39, 50, 16, 81, 49, 33, 76, 5, 7, 11, 22, 6, 3, 17, 68, 1 and 10, JCB 47 will be the latest edition to the numbers (details in www.jbcollection.com), JCB 47 has reserved a spot in <https://shop.jbcollection.com/> post the official Launch in California on June 9.

Packaging

In keeping with the branding strategy of the premium range of Boisset Collection, bottles have been kept very dark in colour with minimalist text in the front, in golden letters- JCB No. 47 by Jean-Charles Boisset and J'noon in bold. Nothing else is legible to the naked eye. The red wine is in a Bordeaux-type (but not quite the same) very heavy, 950 gm bottle. Those who believe in carbon foot prints would cringe at the thought. White is in a heavier-than-usual Burgundy-style bottle. JCB clarifies that the red is styled after their popular Bordeaux Blend- 'Passion' which is a similar bottle, selling for \$84 at their wine shop. Incidentally, the complete branding of JCB Collection and now the Indian version is congruent- with gold-on-black that gives a plush look to the J'noon and JCB Labels.

Collaboration

This is not the first time that JCB has collaborated outside his wineries. **Buena Vista champagne** is being produced in Champagne by a small producer under the specification of the winery and imported into USA and sold under **Buena Vista** label.

He tied up with Steven Spurrier and launched Bride Valley English Sparkling Blanc de Blancs 2013 in the U.S when he flew from London for a blind tasting of his bubbly with the Boisset's JCB No. 9 Russian River Valley Brut Blanc de Blancs 2009. He has also collaborated with a Canadian company to produce ice-wine.

Global Launches

The Launch Party moves to California on June Nine (June 9, 2018)- the date chosen as it rhymes with J'noon, says quirky Jean-Charles. This will be followed by another one in Burgundy- both of them will be the hunting grounds for J'noon and JCB47.

It is a great opportunity for the Indian wines-Fratelli Wines selling in the Luxury section of the trade, to expand their base for high-ended wines in India. For related Articles, click



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