

## An Indian wine with French je ne sais quoi

J'NOON is a new wine collection marking India's entry on to the global platform for fine wines

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J'NOON is the wine project of two oenophiles and winegrowers from different parts of the world. Jean-Charles Boisset (JCB) is a bon vivant who believes that bubbles can be had any time of the day or night. He is also the president of the Boisset Collection, among the biggest French winemaking groups, which has 26 wineries across France, the US and Canada. Kapil Sekhri is the soft-spoken chief executive officer and co-founder of Fratelli Wines, a company that has fused Indian terroir with Italian winemaking traditions. The two men have been business associates since 2015, when Fratelli began distributing wines from the Boisset collection in India. J'NOON is their first collaboration, involving a limited edition (2,400 bottles each) of red, white and sparkling wines. Although each selection has been crafted out of grape varietals grown in the vineyards of Akluj, Maharashtra, the wines follow Burgundian winemaking traditions.

The J'NOON white is a Burgundian blend of Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, while the red follows the Bordeaux tradition, with some of the undertones of Napa Valley, and blends Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. The J'NOON sparkler is 100% Chardonnay and is called JCB No.47, after India's year of independence. J'NOON will also be launched in the Napa Valley, US, in June, followed by France and the UK.

“India is on everyone's radar. People out there want to try a good wine, be it from India or elsewhere,” says Sekhri. He also believes that the Indian wine industry as a whole has evolved along with a growing awareness of wine, and that makes this a good time to create a luxury wine. “Maybe a couple of years before this would have been a little premature as we needed the right vineyards and partners. To have someone like JCB believe in the Indian terroir and our wines presented the perfect opportunity to create something new and at the luxury level,” says Sekhri.

JCB's wine empire straddles the vineyards of Burgundy, with some of the finest old-world wines, to the new-world wines of California's Napa Valley. For Boisset, wine is about accessibility rather than exclusivity and his long-standing dream is to line up wines of all terroir and present them on a global stage. “Kapil had already started to import our wines and when I came here I understood his vision of wanting to create a magnificent wine. We discussed our ideas over a dinner in the Fratelli cellar and we blended wines all night. It turned out to be fabulous, and so we decided to do something about it,” says JCB.

As a wine, J'NOON blends Indian terroir with French craftsmanship—something that goes with Indian cuisine, but can also be recognized on a European table, an idea that is reflected in its clever naming, which adds the right French inflection to an evocative Urdu concept