

# Malaysian influence at Wine For Asia 2011

Malaysia is set to send a large delegation from its wine and F&B industry to Wine for Asia 2011 (WFA), which will be held at Suntec Singapore from 27 to 28 October, 2011. The tenth edition of the most comprehensive wine exhibition in the region will also feature the participation of prominent Malaysian personalities, including wine experts such as Dato Kok Wee Kiat, Roderick Wong and Huza Radzi, leading members of Malaysia's wine, hotel and F&B industries.

Malaysian wine consultant Thomas Ling has also been invited to join the judging panel of the WFA's signature event—the Wine Style Asia Awards (WSAA). Jason Ng, Project Director of Wine For Asia said, "As our nearest neighbour, we expect an estimated 500 Malaysians to attend the two-day show for trade. On the third day, there is the Wine Fiesta which is open to the public."

Malaysia will feature prominently in the panel of judges for the new South-East Asia Wine Pioneer Recognition Award that will be launched at WFA 2011. Dato Kok Wee Kiat, Huza Radzi and Roderick Wong have joined a panel of established and respected wine personalities from the region, to select the first recipient of this prestigious award.

WFA Programme Director, Malcolm Tham said, "Over the last 10 years, the wine market has matured greatly and, WFA has been at the forefront of this development since the first exhibition in 2003.



Thomas Ling, Malaysian wine consultant and one of the judges of the Wine Style Asia Awards.

We have worked with many of the potential nominees in the past. We wanted to take this opportunity—before they retire—to pay tribute to the wine pioneers who have made significant and important contributions to the growth of the wine industry in the region."

Dato Kok Wee Kiat is a famous Malaysian oenophile whose deep knowledge of wines has been recognised by the French. In view of this, they've made him a Chevalier du Tastevin (Brotherhood of Knights of Wine-Tasting Cups) of Burgundy, in the local chapter of *La Chaîne des Rôtisseurs*.

Roderick Wong has been involved as a wine importer,

distributor, retailer, consultant, wine judge and wine educator. Trained by The Courts of Master Sommelier, UK, he holds an Intermediate Certification with the Wine & Spirit Education Trust (UK). He is President of the first Sommelier Association of Malaysia (SOMLAY) and he sits in the council of the South East Asia Sommelier Alliance and is also the founder of The Hilton Wine Academy.

## **Wine Style Asia Awards**

WFA is also well-known for its signature event – the Wine Style Asia Awards (WSAA). This year, Thomas Ling will represent Malaysia on its judging panel for the first time. He is a Certified

Sommelier of the Court of Master Sommeliers, UK, in 2006, the first from Malaysia. He is also the first Malaysian to be accredited the International Burgundy and Bordeaux Educator with the BIVB and CIVB, France, respectively, and is both a Certified Specialist of Wine and Spirits (CSW, CSS) with the Society of Wine Educators, USA. He is also a founding committee member of the Sommelier Association of Malaysia, serving as head of PR Communications and special projects.

He joins an elite panel of judges, comprising established international and regional wine experts to select WSAA's award-winning wines. Mr Tham said, "WSAA is unique because it celebrates top quality wines for the Asian palate and market and we are very pleased to have Thomas on the panel again in 2011."

Thomas is presently a partner in Entwine, a boutique consultancy offering niche business solutions for the food and beverage industry. The WSAA panel of distinguished wine experts, which includes John Chua, President of Chinelli Consultancy as well as Master of Wine Kym Milne MW, consists of both international and regional judges. The former bring their international judging experience while the latter represent the expectations of the Asian markets.

#### **WFA presentation in Kuala Lumpur**

To promote WFA 2011, the organisers held a presentation in Kuala Lumpur in August as part of its four-city road show in South-East Asia. The event was held at Vintry Jaya 33 in Petaling Jaya. The participants got a preview of

new wines and wineries that will be featured at WFA.

Wine professionals and business personalities from Malaysia's F&B industry were invited to see, hear and taste some of the upcoming highlights of WFA 2011, and learn about the marketing campaign to make this year's show one of the most comprehensive exhibitions for the wine business in the region.

Some of the WFA highlights that will be touched on at the roadshow include:

- SEA Wine Pioneer Recognition Award Appreciation Lunch – 27 October, 2011, 12 noon – 1 pm

Pioneers in the industry helped build the region's wine industry in

the 1970s. This award recognises and honours the contributions from the founders.

- Indulgence Singapore Incentive Programme

Details of a special trade visitor package will also be announced at the roadshow.

In addition, during WFA 2011, there will be a signature partner event organised by *The Wine Review*, which is headed by wine consultant and reviewer Ch'ng Poh Tiong. This high-profile wine dinner will feature wines from well-known chateaux in Bordeaux.

For more information, please visit [www.wineforasia.com](http://www.wineforasia.com) or [www.winestyleasiaaward.com](http://www.winestyleasiaaward.com).



(L-R): Roderick Wong, wine expert; Malcolm Tham, WFA Programme Director; and Dato Kok Wee Kiat, wine expert.

# Champagne, Fashion, Luxe



Dom Pérignon unveiled New Delhi's newest uber luxury experience, the Dom Pérignon Lounge at F Bar, Hotel Ashok, New Delhi. The evening, co-hosted by Pernia Qureshi Prasad was a celebration of the spirit of creativity, which saw the city's crème de la crème indulge in their favourite champagne.

This exclusive Dom Pérignon lounge in India is located in a private area of F Bar. Each table offers a bottle of Dom Pérignon. The menu promises to be a gastronomical delight, and will change every week to harmonise with the iconic Champagne.

Gaurav Bhatia, Director, Marketing, Moët Hennessy, India said, "Not only did we celebrate the 'best wine in the world', tonight we also celebrated Delhi's first uber luxury lounge. From Paris, Tokyo and Cannes to New Delhi, the

Dom Pérignon Lounge is a tactile expression of Dom Pérignon's iconic magnificence, spirit and legacy; a space where luxury transcends the de rigueur to create a sublime experience. With the capital's first Dom Pérignon Lounge at the legendary F Bar, we hope to re-define luxe, with a touch of drama, excitement and mystery!"

The ultra-luxurious Dom Pérignon Lounges have already made a mark internationally in some of the fashionable cities in the world such as Paris, Cannes, Sydney and Tokyo.

Rajan Madhu, Managing Director, F Bar said, "The unveiling of Dom Pérignon Lounge is a great occasion, bringing two of the world's most reputed brands Moët Hennessy and F Bar together, to create the most exclusive and inspirational destination in India".



# A brand new party destination!

Pune, the trendiest party destination in India has a new entrant – Kue Bar. A signature bar at all Westin properties worldwide (known elsewhere as Q Bar), it made its foray into the Indian clubbing scene at The Westin Pune Koregaon Park. The jazzy new bar provides a complete clubbing experience with a comfortably plush and partly covered sitting area on the outside that leads you through a double door into the dancing area.

Drawing inspiration from Cuban culture, the ambience is sure to make any guest let their hair down and party the night away while washing down a whole week's stress with their amazing cocktails. The signature cocktails include 'Flying Vixen', 'Flaming Venom', 'Venga Girls', 'Kuebano' and 'Hemingway'.

You must end the night with a glass of Absinthe Fountain. And, in case you're in the mood for a regular drink, you have plenty of options in Scotch, wine, etc. Just a



warning though: the bartenders make drinks strong and tasty enough to get you heady after just two glasses.

The culinary theatre lining the outdoor area is where some of the most delectable delights are conjured by talented chefs. With a range of Latin and Asian dishes, you can never go wrong with whatever you choose. But, make sure you try the delicious beef sate. The portions melt in your mouth leaving a satisfying after-taste.

~ Aishik Barua

# Timmermans set for Indian launch



Roque Enterprises launched noted Belgian Lambic beer Timmermans in the Indian market in mid-September. With the general trend and consumer affinity for craft beers in India on the rise, with a number of big as well as boutique brands of ales, lagers, wheat beers and ciders hitting the market, the decision according to Roque Enterprises chairman Pradeep Vohra, is a timely one. The company will import the Gueuze and fruit-flavoured Lambics to begin with and have a specific focus on certain restaurants and hotels, and then have a gradual,

countrywide roll out next year. The initial focus, Vohra said, will be on the hotel and standalone restaurants and bars, with an interesting focus on those outlets that concentrate on serving-up the beer experience. Beer, like wine and cocktails, needs a serious service culture. The glassware, the temperature of the bottle and how the beer is poured is important. With premium beers like Lambics, this attention to detail is even more imperative.

Speaking of the range of Timmermans that Roque Enterprises plans to introduce, the Gueuze Lambic is an inarguable trump card and is considered the beer's parallel to champagne. For one thing, it shares a similar closure. "The Gueuze has champagne-like closure because like sparkling wine, this beer is matured in vats. The one and two-year-old beers are blended and then bottled. However, the natural yeast is still alive and present in the beer so it continues to ferment



and the carbon dioxide builds up, waiting up to pop through. All this while, the beer is ageing and improving," Vohra reveals.

Timmermans' history of brewing goes back over three centuries when they started brewing Gueuze Lambic in Itterbeek, outside Brussels. Interestingly, Lambic beer is made purely from spontaneous fermentation with wild yeast causing the fermentation rather than tailor-made yeasts, which is the case with mass-produced beers.

In fact, wild yeast is believed to be endemic to an area within 15 kms of Brussels. The fruit beers, according to Anupam Mayekar, India representative for Timmermans, are positioned to appeal to a large number of drinkers who stay off beer because of its perceived dry and rather heavy taste. The fruit beers to be introduced in the first phase include strawberry, peach, raspberry and cherry.

~ Bhisham Mansukhani



# SKYY vodka gives Indian bartenders a forum to excel

India's first ever leg of the prominent vodka brand SKYY's Global Flair Challenge organised by its importer Aspri Spirits was bagged by Mumbai-based bartender Sachin Gowda. He is now busy preparing to showcase his skill on the global stage at SKYY Vodka's Global Flair Challenge in Dubai, late October. Sachin faced some of the country's best bartenders from across Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata and other satellite cities to earn the chance to represent India on the world stage.

The competition had three pre-final regional stages held in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai, and saw its final round hosted by China House in the Grand Hyatt, Mumbai. All stages were judged by Shatbhi Basu, India's most recognised bartending personality, professional mixologist and veteran bartender trainer, Sumedh Singh Mandla, CEO Aspri Spirits and Rohan Carvalho, India Ambassador for the World Flair Association (WFA). Mandla told **Liquid** that the company intended



to ramp up its current portfolio of SKYY vodka by two infusions each year, going forward. SKYY Vodka has a number of different fruit and herb-infused vodkas in its portfolio, worldwide.

The parameters and crucial aspects for the competitors in this bartending challenge were in the tradition of Tom Cruise and Bryan Brown in *Cocktail*, the 1988 genre classic for bartenders—plenty of slick bottle juggling and balancing the tall bottles on the tip of the index and middle finger before unloading it into tall, tapering or shot glasses for a signature vodka SKYY or bitters aperitif Campari based cocktails or a combination that swallowed both of them.

Sachin managed to incorporate the vodka and show impressive dexterity in keeping multiple glass bottles in the air at the same time, within the given time limit to wow judges with his presentation style and eventually, his cocktail.

Sachin told **Liquid** about his humble beginnings in Pune at a restaurant called Trikaya, whose owner was kind enough to allow him time off to practise his flair bartending skills in a nearby garden for hours and hours on end. Sachin will receive guidance and perspective from one of the judges Rohan, on how to meet the competitive forthcoming international challenge.

Mandla further told **Liquid** that the competition had provided SKYY with a welcome fillip and brand awareness boost. SKYY now has a presence in over 16 domestic markets and the infused vodkas, given their smooth, rounded finish and fruit flavours have unlocked a potentially larger market of Indian vodka drinkers. "The next edition of the global competition's Indian leg is likely to see an eastern region round, out of Kolkata," Mandla said.

~ Bhasham Mansukhani

