

What: The International Vine and Food Experience, curated by sommelier Keith W. Edgar, in association with Kutchina, powered by Qatar Airways

When: April 11 and 12

Where: Taj Bengal

The first night was all about 200 guests milling about in the Crystal Room, taking a sip or several from the 27 stalls of Indian and imported wine, as Indian wine-makers took the podium for masterclasses on their respective labels. The second night was a more formal black-tie affair with a sit-down dinner crafted by Canadian chef Marc Thuet, paired with some respectable wines from across the globe. t2 brings a glimpse of the bacchanalian nights...

TWO NIGHTS OF GREAT WINE, GOURMET FOOD AND MASTERCLASSES WITH CONNOISSEURS AT TAJ BENGAL



LAURA COLLOBIANO, ITALY

Vino Tenuta di Valgiano Colline Lucchesi DOC Rosso — now that's quite a mouthful and Laura Collobiano discussed the finer points of biodynamic viticulture through this Super Tuscan wine, served from four vintages — 2003, 2007, 2010, 2011.

Laura bought the vineyard in 1993 and turned to organic farming in 1997. By 2000 she had made a switch to biodynamic farming. So what does biodynamic farming involve? It is a special kind of green farming

with emphasis on manure and phases of the moon. "We bury 3,000 cow horns filled with cow dung for six months. They come out as pure humus, retaining 70 per cent weight in humidity. We mix this with water and spray in the vineyard, once in autumn and once in spring. This accelerates productivity in flowers," says Laura.

Of the vintages she walks the audience through, the most significant she feels is the 2011. "It really opened up after March 21, the solstice day. Before that the wine didn't taste as good", emphasising that it is important to go by moon phases when bottling as well, in order for the wine to



come out right. "We have no importers in India but Goddess Kali willing, I'll be back," she promises.

Grape varieties: 70 per cent Sangiovese, 15 per cent Shiraz and "a bit of Merlot".

Tasting notes: Plums, cherries and raspberries, primarily fruity notes, with secondary tastes of leather. "It tastes like you're walking into the woods," adds Laura.

VISHAL KAKADIA

Vishal Kakadia of Wine Park presented on Saint Clair Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand. With first plantings in 1973, Saint Clair, owned by Neal and Judy Ibbotson, has been ranked one of the top 30 wineries



MAGANDEEP SINGH

Sommelier

KEITH W. EDGAR, CANADA

He walked the class through Canadian ice wines.



KALALA 2007 CHARDONNAY

Grape varietal: Chardonnay
Tasting notes: Fresh, buttery, smooth, ripe apple, apricot, melon, lemon zest, hint of oak vanilla, toasted marshmallow.



HENRY OF PELHAM 2012

Grape varietal: Vidal grapes from Niagara peninsula.
Tasting notes: With pineapple and mango notes, this is a tart and piquant, complex wine.

ZIRALDO 2012 RIESLING

Grape varietal: Riesling.
Tasting notes: Flowers, tropical fruit, green apple, mineral stones. "Ice wines are harvested from grapes frozen between -8°C and -10°C. As the ice crystals freeze out water in the grapes, only a few drops of juice are left, lending intense flavour. You have to be careful about the temperature, because a one-degree drop may mean intense ice crystals that rupture the grape. It compares to cognac or port in terms of intensity," says Keith, presenting on behalf of Pelee Island Winery.
Pair with: Fresh fruit, fruity desserts, cheese or even bread and butter pudding.

F. JAVIER PEREZ BERNAL

Area manager, Grupo Faustino

A fourth generation family business, with 2,000 hectares of vineyard, Bodegas Faustino has 150 years of winemaking experience.



The four wines presented at the Faustino Rioja master class included Crianza 2009, Reserva 2006, Gran Reserva 2000 and Gran Reserva 1970.

CRIANZA 2009

MICHEL DRAPPIER, FRANCE

With a list of aficionados including everyone from the French president downwards, the house of Drappier was founded in 1808, in Urville region of Champagne. The vines were planted by the Romans 2,000 years ago and the cellars date back to 1152, built by Saint Bernard, the founding abbot of Clairvaux Abbey. Michel Drappier of the house of Drappier explains four wines...



DRAPPIER CARTE D'OR

Grape varieties: 80 per cent Pinot Noir (the only grape with red skin and white juice), with 15 per cent Chardonnay and five per cent Pinot Meunier.

Tasting notes: Made only with juices of the first pressing — cuvee — this wine is aromatic with notes of peach, pear, hazelnut and red fruits, with a pronounced note of quince jelly, which accounts for the quince yellow shade of the label on the bottle.

Pair with: White fish, Chaource cheese and white meat. "The fresh, acidic Pinot Noir pairs well with Indian cuisine," says Michel Drappier.

DRAPPIER ROSE

Grape varietal: Made with 100 per cent Pinot Noir, the rose hue imparted when the white grape juice comes in contact with red