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Interview



The Indian wine market has been registering an average annual growth of 25% over the last five years

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## Sunshine industry

The Indian Wine Industry has been showing an amazing growth over the last five years. Pragati Fast spoke to Ranjit Dhuru, Chairman & Managing Director, D'Ori Wineries about this growth and the kind of job opportunities it presented.

### How has the wine industry grown over the years?

The wine industry has a long history that dates back to early human history, when fruit juices accidentally fermented, leaving behind a pleasant drink for people to enjoy to the present. In the last twenty years, the global wine industry has become increasingly internationalised and sophisticated, though over the years, the market has become fragmented, international, multi-lingual, operating in many currencies, and information intensive.

Global wine showed solid growth in terms of volume in recent years, reaching nearly 25,066 million litres. The two countries that are leading in international wine pro-

duction and consumption are France and Italy. In terms of the quality of exports as reflected in the average export price, France's strong position has remained unchanged while emerging countries like Australia and New Zealand have improved their positions hugely over the past decade.

More than three-quarters of the volume of world wine production, consumption, and trade involve Europe, and most of the rest involves just a handful of New World countries. In the late 1980s, Europe accounted in value terms for all but five per cent of wine exports and three-quarters of wine imports globally.

### And the Indian Wine Industry....

Wine today is seen as a sunshine industry in India. Over 60 wineries have mushroomed in India during the past three to four years. Most of these are situated in the district of Nashik, making it the wine capital of India. The 'Grape Processing Industrial Policy' of the State

Government announced in 2001, was the catalyst that Maharashtra needed to transform its position as the country's largest producer of grapes to the largest producer of wine. Today it has over 50 wineries with six-million litre production capacities.

The Indian wine market is currently at 1.2 million cases (12 bottles of 750 ml per case), valued at approx. Rs 450 crore. The Indian wine market has been registering an average annual growth of 25% over the last five years and is expected to grow to 8.3 million litres by 2010.

The Indian market is way behind major wine drinking countries. The per capita consumption in India is only 0.07 litre/person/year as against 60-70 litres in France and Italy, 25 litres in US and 20 litres in Australia and even China has 0.4 litres. UK-based International Wines and Spirits Records (IWSR) says that wine consumption is poised to grow three-fold by 2011.

**Which are the major wine consuming markets in India?**

Western India accounts for almost 41% of the wine consumption followed by Northern India at 29%. Nearly 80 per cent of wine sales are accounted for by the major cities, especially New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Pune and Bangalore. And even more interesting, 63% of the volume sales takes place through five-star hotels, pubs, bars and restaurants.

**What do you think has caused this spurt in growth for the Indian wine industry?**

One of the primary reasons is that most Indian bottles cost around \$10, making them far more affordable than foreign wines, which can cost several times what they would in Europe or the US due to heavy taxes and import duties. The wine importing business is also murky with grey-market bootleggers and improperly stored bottles, making locally produced wine an attractive option.

**If one was to look at the job opportunities in the Indian wine industry, what are the various options available?**

There are two broad areas of operations for any winery, viz., at the winery and outside the winery. The operations at the winery can be further divided into two broad areas, viz., the plantation and the winery. Lets take each area one-by-one:

**At the Winery**

**The Plantation:** It is critical that anyone looking at working at any kind of a responsible position and looking at growth has to be a B.Sc. or M.Sc in Agriculture and then should have studied Viticulture,

which is the science, production and study of grapes which deals with the series of events that occur in the vineyard.

**The duties of a Viticulturalist broadly include :** monitoring and controlling pests and diseases, fertilizing, irrigation, canopy management, monitoring fruit development and characteristics, deciding when to harvest and vine pruning during the winter months. Viticulturalists are often intimately involved with winemakers, because vineyard management and the resulting grape characteristics, provide the basis from which winemaking can begin.

**The Winery :** The winery is typically the domain of the Oenologist. Oenology or enology is the science and study of all aspects of wine and winemaking from the grape harvest to bottle. An expert in the field of oenology is known as an oenologist. The oenologist is assisted by a team of Resident wine maker, Asst. Wine Makers, Chemists, Production Managers and Quality Control Managers.

An integral part of a winery is the crushers, fermenting tanks, the storage vats, the bottling units, and the storage areas. It is critical that temperatures in each of these areas are controlled to perfection as any variation in temperature can ruin the product. This opens opportunities for qualified engineers, refrigeration experts, and maintenance engineers. This is also one more avenue for Administration and Finance professionals.

**Outside the Winery :** As a part of the winery, one can be a part of the Sales & Marketing team, ensuring placement of wines at retail outlets

and major hotels, wine bars, lounge bars. The other target is to place the wines as the "table wine" or "pouring wine" at leading restaurants. Another aspect of the job is to plan and execute promotional campaigns to create awareness and thereby boost sales of the products.

**All this sounds very interesting and fascinating, but where does one gain all this knowledge? Which are the institutes or universities that offer courses in Viticulture and Oenology?**

Most agricultural colleges will offer a course in Viticulture. Oenology will be the difficult one. Currently India has only two institutes offering a wine-making course. One is Gargi Agriculture Research and the other is Training Institute in Nashik and Vasantdada Sugar Institute in Pune. One has heard of some international institutes. The University of Adelaide is tying up with a major vineyard to set up an institute at Narayangaon near Pune.

Internationally, there are scores of institutes and universities that offer courses in Oenology. Notable among them are UC Davis Graduate School of Management, BC Wines Institute, The Institute of Culinary Education, Wine Institute, California; CCOVI at Brock University, Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE; Department of Viticulture & Oenology, Institute for Wine Biotechnology, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa; INRA at Montpellier, France; Université Victor Segalen Bordeaux 2, France, University of British Columbia, Wine Research Centre.

